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City brokers stage revolt over plans for electronic trading system

London stock market chief is dismissed

By MELVYN MARCUS and ALASDAIR MURRAY

MICHAEL LAWRENCE, the £342,000-a-year Chief Executive of the London Stock Exchange, was dismissed yesterday after a revolt by several powerful stockbroking firms.

The reason given by the Stock Exchange for the abrupt and unexpected dismissal of Mr Lawrence was a "loss of confidence". John Kemp-Welch, Chairman of the Stock Exchange, admitted that the departure of Mr Lawrence, the second chief executive to be sacked in two and a half years, was "undoubtedly a setback", although he hoped this would prove "temporary".

Mr Lawrence is understood to have been informed of the decision at a meeting with Mr Kemp-Welch which lasted less than half an hour yesterday morning. Mr Lawrence receives a basic salary of £240,000 and enjoys a one-year service contract. He received a £100,000 performance bonus last year.

Mr Kemp-Welch, the former senior partner of Cazenove, the City's most prestigious stockbroking house, will chair the Stock Exchange's executive committee pending the appointment of Mr Lawrence's successor.

Late last November, Mr Lawrence disclosed plans for the Stock Exchange to press ahead with the introduction of an electronic "order matching" system of share trading, despite bitter opposition from City market making firms.

Mr Lawrence described the development as a "very impor-

tant step for the Stock Exchange and for London as a financial centre" but it is no secret that his enthusiasm for competitive styles of trading was not shared by many Stock Exchange firms.

Major market making firms such as BZW, an offshoot of Barclays Bank, and Smith New Court, recently acquired by Merrill Lynch, the US stockbroking combine, had waged a campaign against electronic "order matching".

It is believed that a delegation of Stock Exchange board members met Mr Kemp-Welch on Wednesday evening and delivered an ultimatum to the Stock Exchange chairman. The delegation is understood to have been drawn from the Stock Exchange's Senior Appointments and Remuneration Committee.

Mr Lawrence, a former Finance Director at Prudential, the insurance company, was appointed in February 1994 after the previous chief executive, Peter Rawlinson, resigned following the £400 million Taurus trading system fiasco.

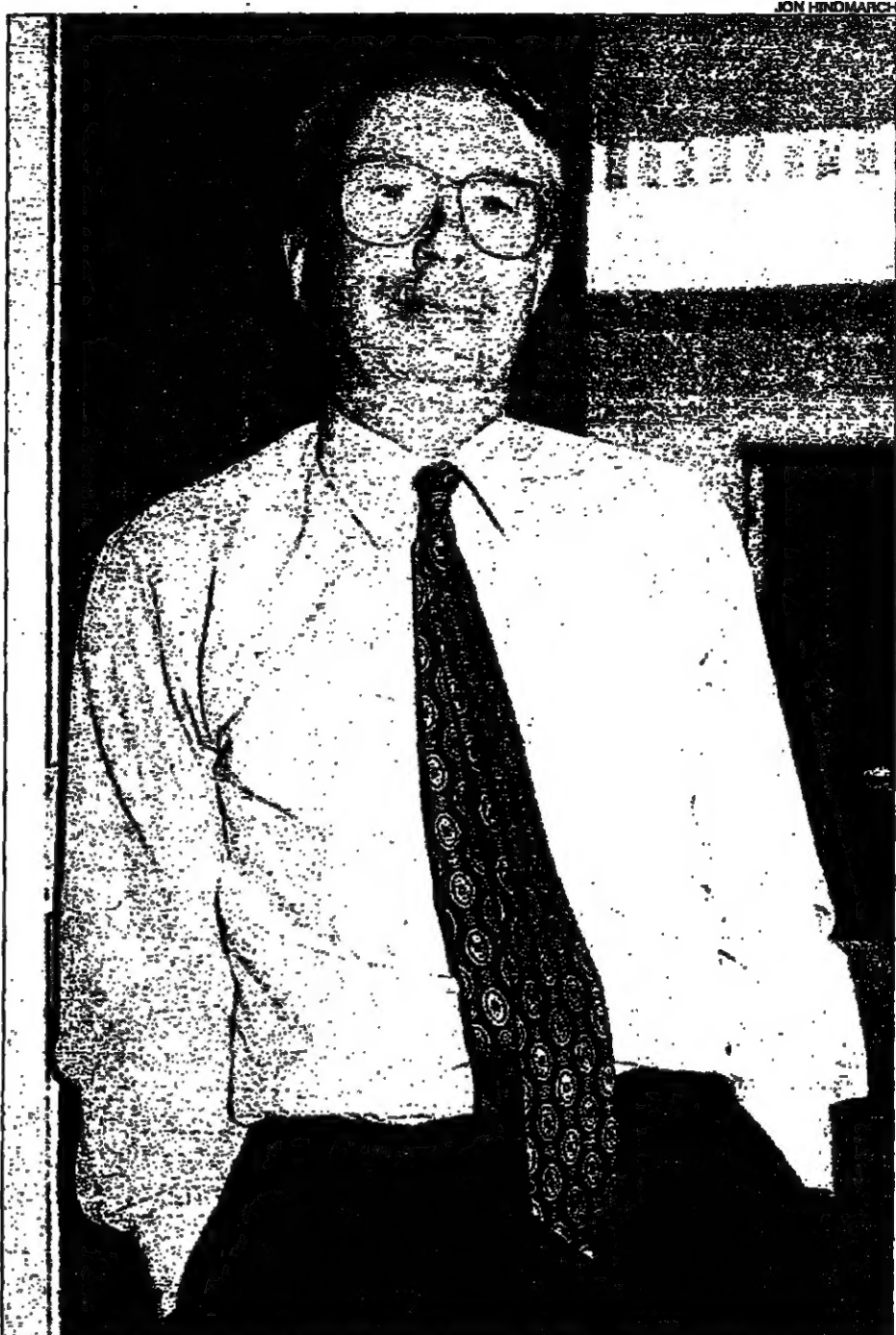
Mr Lawrence said last night: "I am disappointed to leave but I am happy with the programme of major initiatives and the excellent executive team. But the reforms must be allowed to continue unabated." Negotiations over compensation will start shortly. The Exchange has not ruled out the possibility that Mr Lawrence could receive a bonus for this year. Last night at his country home in

Cookham, Berkshire, which has a tennis court and swimming pool, his wife, Maureen, said: "He just came back at 4.30 this afternoon and said, 'I've been sacked. That's it'. I did not get much chance to speak to him about it, because he had an engagement this evening and had to go out."

Born into a lower middle class family in Harrow, North London, Mr Lawrence came from neither of the City's traditional backgrounds — working class and streetwise, or blue chip. He was educated at Watford grammar school and Exeter and Bristol universities, taking a first class degree in physics and a PhD in mathematical physics.

He became an accountant and was the Prudential Corporation's finance director when offered the Stock Exchange job at the age of 30. He and his wife run a private aviation company and private property group. He sails with his family and drives a red Aston Martin which he bought from Rowan Atkinson, the comedian.

After yesterday's board meeting Mr Kemp-Welch said: "While Mr Lawrence's departure reflects the loss of confidence in him by the board, it does not imply any change in the Stock Exchange's policy. Our objective is to be the market of choice. To achieve that, we have a large programme of work in train and this will be pursued vigorously." Mr Kemp-Welch emphasised that a steering committee had been formed to



Michael Lawrence back home in Cookham, Berks, after his sudden dismissal

"oversee the implementation of the decision taken at the Stock Exchange board meeting of 30 November, 1995 regarding the structure and regulation of the markets. That decision provides for the Exchange's service to include full electronic trading and

order matching." It was the Exchange's decision to press ahead with establishing a system of trading shares according to the number of orders placed rather than the existing system where dealers are forced to give a price before they know

the size of order, that has proved particularly damaging to Mr Lawrence. Market makers have warned that it is a threat to the market's liquidity.

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Blair's low tax pledge to businesses in Far East

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR today promised foreign investors low taxes and low inflation in a Labour-run Britain.

In his most audacious move yet to capture the Conservative mantle for economic competence, Mr Blair told Far East business leaders that a Labour government would be better placed than the Tories to keep Britain internationally competitive and an attractive investment prospect.

It would back free trade, keep economic policy tight and disciplined, avoid the boom-and-bust policies of the 1980s and regard low inflation as the "essential prerequisite" of long-term investment.

He pledged that Labour's tax rates would be aimed not merely at keeping highly skilled workers but attracting them. Promising that there would be no repeal of the main trade union legislation passed by the Conservatives, Mr Blair said it was no part of his role "to switch the clock back to the 1970s".

Mr Blair promised a more positive attitude towards the European Union and, a week after the defection from the Tories of Emma Nicholson, underlined his own belief in the politics of one nation. The new era of opportunity must not divide societies into two, with a secure and prosperous top half and undereducated, unskilled bottom half.

The Labour leader used a speech early today in Tokyo to the Keidanren, Japan's equivalent of the Confederation of British Industry, to underline that Britain's potential as a home for investors would be enhanced rather than diminished under Labour because of its plans for investment in reskilling and educating the workforce. His aim, and that of Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, who is touring the

United States, is to bury the image of state interference that has dogged previous Labour administrations.

Just staying on the right side of the convention that Opposition leaders should not criticise the British Government while abroad, Mr Blair said there would be a Labour government in months and certainly by the middle of next year, was real.

"If the British people decide that the baton should pass to us, it goes without saying that in my view this will be of benefit not just to Britain but the wider world."

Stating that he wanted Labour to be seen as the party of business, Mr Blair emphasised:

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sed that some of the changes made by the Conservatives in the 1980s to dismantle the barriers to competition were there to stay. But now a new approach, a second era of change was needed. To compete in the world countries had to invest in new capacity but also in the flexibility of its people. The economics of the next century would be dominated by countries that saved, invested and innovated.

David Willets, the Public Service Minister, said it was "bit rich" for Mr Blair to promise the Japanese they had nothing to fear. While he was making reassuring noises his spokesmen were ranting against privatisation and demanding state intervention and spending, all things that would put off foreign investors.

Two held after teenager dies

Police have arrested two men in connection with the killing of teenager Anthony Erskine, who was killed to death by a gang of youths after going to the aid of his father. Officers broke into a house near the teenager's home in Stratford-upon-Avon to detain them. The dead teenager's twin brother spoke yesterday of the family's grief and outrage at the killing. Page 3

South Africans take Test series

England's latest batting collapse cost them the final Test, enabling South Africa to take the five-match series. England were all out for 157 and South Africa, needing only 67 to win, got the runs without losing a wicket. Page 36

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Thatcher joins attacks on RAF's Gulf War tactics

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

BARONESS Thatcher has joined Britain's Gulf War commander in criticising the RAF's low-level bombing tactics during the 1991 conflict.

Lady Thatcher who was no longer Prime Minister at the start of the coalition air campaign in January 1991, has disclosed that the loss of air crew deeply upset her and she had raised the matter with ministers.

In a four-part BBC documentary starting this Sunday and marking the fifth anniversary of the Gulf War, she says: "They had to go in low and we were losing a pilot a night. I got very upset and said that there's something wrong with the way we are doing this, and let those views be known."

Her comments echoed those of General Sir Peter de la Bille, the British forces commander in the Gulf, who says in the documentary that he was overruled when he tried to stop the low-level bombing.

He told the Ministry of Defence: "I don't want to go on doing it."

Yesterday, angered by the criticisms of the bombing tactics, RAF chiefs called a press conference to deny the allegations that they had wasted lives by continuing with the low-level raids. Four Tornados were lost in five nights of low-level bombing, with four members of the crews killed and four taken prisoner.

Air Chief Marshal Sir William Wroughton, who was the UK air commander in the Gulf War, denied that he had been ordered by the Defence Ministry to carry on with low-

level bombing raids, despite the heavy losses. Sir William, who is now Commander-in-Chief RAF Strike Command, said he had been in touch with Sir Peter about the allegations. He said: "We were not held at low-level for longer than I as air commander felt we should be. I was not forbidden from changing anything. Low-level attacks stopped when we wanted them to."

He also said that, although he was always concerned about casualties, the losses on the first nights of the air campaign had not played a part in the decision to stop low-level bombing which was made after it became clear that the Iraqis were not going to launch large-scale air raids. That made it unnecessary to

Continued on page 2, col 4

Killing of head: boy is arrested

POLICE were last night questioning a 15-year-old schoolboy in connection with the murder of Philip Lawrence, the west London headmaster who was stabbed when he went to protect a pupil being attacked by a gang of youths outside his school (Stewart Trender writes).

The arrest in Kenilworth was made after intensive investigations in north London. These centred on a gang thought to include young Filipinos, but police refused yesterday to confirm details of the boy or his background.

The boy is not a pupil of St George's Roman Catholic School in Maids Vale where Mr Lawrence, 48, was the headmaster. The school reopened yesterday and a spokesman said that children were coping well over the violent death of their head.

Scientists spend £750,000 on fruit pastilles

By KATE ALDERSON

AFTER 115 years of sweet-making, scientists have been called in, with the aid of £750,000, to discover the secret behind the chewy Rowntree fruit pastille.

Nestlé's York-based research centre and the Applied Biology department at the city's university have joined forces in an attempt to find out just what makes the pastille, and other "secret" food products, taste so good. The pastille derives from a recipe in 1881 and was developed by trial and error. But now a

team of scientists are investigating how the pastille achieves its texture. In the process it is being subjected to "nuclear magnetic resonance" and "capillary electrophoresis", as well as microsampling, to study the pastille's biopolymer mixtures — starches, pectins and gelatins — and how they react with each other and in the mouth.

Dr Steve Whitehouse, a senior scientist at Nestlé, said the making of the fruit pastille was an historical confectioner's art. "This project enables us to look at the process closely and achieve a greater

understanding. We are not looking to change the sweet but any product is forever under review with the object of improving it."

Dr Julian White of York University, said Unilever and three other companies were involved in the research, which is part-funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

"This is not simply about the pastille," he said. "But by understanding the science involved, various food producers will be able to develop different types of food with different types of texture."



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Blair plays new economy card to trump Tory appeal

TONY BLAIR is determined not to be out-manoeuvred by the Tories on the economy. His Tokyo speech is designed to counter the Tories' attempt to portray themselves as the only party that can ensure that Britain is internationally competitive — the enterprise centre of Europe in the often-repeated refrain of the past few months.

Ministers argue that, however clumsy, this is a unifying theme that will differentiate the Tories from Labour, with its high tax and spending past and support for a minimum wage and the European social chapter. The election will, on this view, turn on which party offers the best chance of competing with the "Asian tigers".

Mr Blair's attempt to trump this appeal is startling to anyone accustomed to the language of "old" Labour. The globalisation of the world economy is seen as

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

both inevitable and desirable. Not only is inward investment embraced, but the Labour leader warns against "inflexibility in labour markets", promises that there will be no repeal of the main elements of the 1980s trade union legislation, and accepts that tax rates need to be fixed to attract highly skilled labour from abroad. Labour's

commitment to the social chapter is brushed aside as merely an opportunity to influence discussions. Labour, he admits, "took far too long in the 1980s to face up to the need for change". What was wrong was that the changes then did not go far enough.

The reduction of barriers, the opening up of markets and tax reductions, are only the first phase. What is now needed, he says, is a second phase to make Britain more competitive and attractive to inward investors. This concentrates on education and training on a lifelong basis, private and public sector co-operation to revitalise infrastructure and increase innovation.

This is common ground with the Tories on objectives — as shown by the private finance initiative and the work of Michael Heseltine's competitiveness unit. The differences are about which party is more credible to deliver.

Mr Blair also emphasised the social implications of these economic upheavals, avoiding division between "a relatively secure and prosperous top part and an unskilled, undereducated bottom part". Hence, he stresses that competitiveness must be linked to social cohesion and fairness: "only in this way can we persuade our people to live and thrive in the new global economy". Social exclusion should be tackled by education reforms and "welfare to work" changes to the benefit system.

The Government is vulnerable because its initiatives have appeared piecemeal and there has been little attempt to articulate an overall response to these worries over insecurity, in tactical terms. Mr Blair's speech is intended to head off government claims that the economy is strong again.

The Labour view will be that the economy is not doing as well as it should, and the benefits are not being distributed fairly. In past elections, Labour has been defensive on the economy. He is now claiming the Tories' ground.

PETER RIDDELL

Labour examines plans to privatise the welfare state

BY NICHOLAS WOOD, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR leaders are to examine plans for privatising the £90 billion a year welfare budget. Workers and their employers could end up funding savings schemes that would cover the cost of pensions, unemployment, sickness benefit and long-term nursing care. This would mean shifting at least part of the burden of the welfare state from the taxpayer to families and private firms. The Government would remain the insurer of last resort for poor people.

The ideas have been floated by the Adam Smith Institute, a free-market think-tank normally associated with the Conservatives. While they appear to have found little favour with Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, they have struck a chord with Tony Blair, the Labour leader. He has told Chris Smith, the

Shadow Social Security Secretary, to "think the unthinkable" in reviewing the welfare system, which now consumes one-third of public spending. The approach could enable a Labour government to cut taxes significantly. However, the Labour Left will be suspicious of anything smacking of privatising the welfare state. Mr Smith will fly to Singapore this weekend for talks about the country's privately-funded safety net, which has been operating successfully for 40 years. He will study Singapore's Central Provident Fund (CPF) under which employees and firms each contribute 20 per cent of an individual's salary.

Mr Smith, who will meet Mr Blair in Singapore on Monday after the Labour leader's visit to Japan, said he was attracted to some of Singapore's ideas, particularly on pension provision and house purchase. Mr Smith is to see Lee Boon Yang, the Minister for Labour. Mr Smith said: "The idea of the fund, which is a fund underpinned by the government but in which the individual has their own personal stake, seems to me worth having a look at."

The CPF builds up individual savings accounts which a worker can invest and use for specified welfare purposes. The savings become freely available at the age of 55, on retirement, disablement or death and can be passed on to the next generation. They generate a large potential source of investment for industry and commerce.

Mr Smith said that he did not envisage such funds playing a role in paying for the National Health Service. But he did think that they might have a role as an alternative to private pensions and the much diminished State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme. He also thought they could be useful in giving people a capital asset to be used as security in borrowing money to buy a house. Mr Smith added that he would reserve judgment on other potential applications of such funds until he had had a chance to study them further. "I am not ruling anything out, but at this stage I am not ruling it in either."

By-election ruled out

THE Liberal Democrats yesterday ruled out a by-election in Emma Nicholson's West Country seat.

The announcement by party officials ended speculation triggered by Miss Nicholson and Paddy Ashdown after her defection from the Conservatives to the Liberal Democrats last week.

Both said that they would not stand in the way of public pressure for her to stand down as MP for Devon West and Torridge and fight a by-election as the Liberal Democrat candidate.

Despite anecdotal evidence suggesting that local people wanted a chance to pass judgment on the MPs' defection, the Liberal Democrats closed the door on such a move. Willie Rennie, the Liberal Democrat campaigns officer for Devon and Cornwall, said there had been no strong grassroots call for a by-election.



John Nichol, a member of a Tornado crew captured by the Iraqis, helps to launch the BBC documentary yesterday

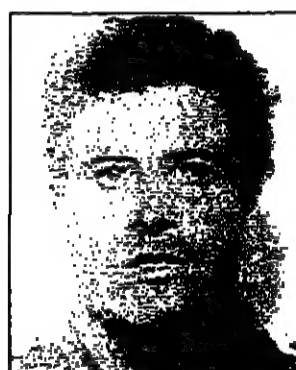
Thatcher joins attack on RAF tactics

Continued from page 1 continue bombing the airfields with the RAF's JP233 runway-denial bombs. The other reasons for the change, he said, were the intensity of Iraq's air defences and the need to destroy Iraq's Scud missile launchers.

Sir William said it was on "day four" of the air campaign that he discussed the low-level tactics with his detachment commanders and with Air Chief Marshal Sir Patrick Hine, Britain's joint forces commander, and agreed that the Tornados should switch to medium-level bombing.

That decision took some time to evolve. On the fifth night of the air campaign, January 21, a Tornado hit the ground after coming out of

low-level attack, killing the two members of the crew. Only one Tornado was lost during JP233 low-level attacks. The four others lost at low level had dropped 1,000lb



Nichol, left, and John Peters, also captured, on Iraqi TV

campaign. In all, the RAF lost six Tornados and the Americans lost 27 aircraft. Sir William was aware of a letter written by a senior RAF officer in the Ministry calling for the low-level raids to continue. That irritated him, but "it was not a form of pressure".

Schools facing teacher shortage

State schools will need 10,000 more teachers each year by the end of the century to save off a looming recruitment crisis, the Government's senior adviser on teacher training said yesterday. Anthea Millett, chief executive of the Teacher Training Agency, will spell out staffing needs in detail for the first time when she speaks today at the North of England Education Conference, in Gateshead. The agency has already been asked to increase the number of secondary school trainees by half and primary school trainees by a third.

First on file

Martin Crumpton, 44, a father of two, became the first Briton to be jailed for receiving child pornographic pictures over the Internet. Files on his home computer contained pictures of children about six years old being abused by adults, a court in Solihull heard. He got three months, his lawyer said. He had financial difficulties.

Peace patrons

The Queen and President Robinson of Ireland are to become joint patrons of Co-Operation North, a charity aimed at fostering closer understanding and co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. Mrs Robinson has formally accepted an invitation to make an official visit to Britain later this year.

Drink-drive call

Scottish chief constables called for permitted alcohol levels for drivers to be lowered from 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood to 50 milligrams, in line with France and other countries, to reduce drink-related road accidents. Over the Christmas period, only 987 drivers tested positive out of a record 76,500 stopped in Scotland.

Police tests

Up to 2,500 police will test CS sprays on the streets once the go-ahead for trials is formally given by chief constables later this month after they debate a report on its medical effects. The Home Office said there were no bars to the issue of the spray providing that all the medical questions about its effects had been answered.

Divorce tactics

The Princess of Wales is due to meet her solicitor today after returning home from her Caribbean holiday to discuss how to respond to the Queen's request urgently to consider a divorce from the Prince of Wales. It is understood that the Princess will discuss tactics with Anthony Julius, of the solicitors Mishcon de Reya.

Asthma doubled in five years

CASES of asthma have doubled among schoolchildren in five years, contrary to claims that the disease peaked in the mid-1980s, a study shows (see page 10).

One in five children in Aberdeen was diagnosed with asthma in 1994 compared with one in ten in 1989. The rise in asthma has been less steep — from one in eight in 1989 to one in six in 1994. Wheezing and other allergic disorders have also increased sharply according to the survey, one of the world's longest, which began in 1964.

The researchers, from the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, sent questionnaires to the parents of 4,000 children aged from eight to 13.

The results, published in the *British Medical Journal*, showed increases in the prevalence of wheezing, asthma and eczema, but not of hay fever. The authors suggest a lack of anti-oxidants in diet — vitamins and minerals obtained chiefly from fruit and vegetables — or changes in the indoor environment or lifestyle are most likely to blame.

Santer refuses to budge for Major

BY PHILIP WEBSTER

JACQUES SANTER yesterday provoked the wrath of British Euro-sceptics with a prediction that nine countries could be ready to go ahead with a single currency in 1999 and a call for "wholesale reform" at this year's conference on the future of the European Union.

The European Commission President again put Brussels on a collision course with John Major by insisting that a further weakening of the veto, to which Britain has already declared its opposition, was essential. M. Santer also declared that any attempt to delay monetary union was unacceptable, playing down the study won by Mr Major at the Madrid summit into the implications of some countries taking part in a monetary union and others not.

M. Santer said in an interview to *The World at One* on BBC radio that the conference should opt for the "wholesale reform in many areas, like in the common foreign and security policy, and some extension of qualified majority

voting in certain areas to make the EU work more efficiently". He said an EU of 15 countries was now working with institutions and a voting system initially proposed for six. Majority voting had to be extended "if we are to exploit the potentialities of the internal market".

Mr Major has repeatedly said that only a small minority of countries are likely to be able to go ahead with a single currency on January 1, 1999.

M. Santer said efforts would have to be made to build "strong relations" between those who pressed ahead with monetary union and those who did not. "It seems the UK is in a very privileged situation because it is benefiting from the opt-out clause," he said. "Therefore it is up to the Government to decide if it wants to join monetary union at the time or not."

But he made clear that the campaign to promote monetary union and a single currency would go ahead in Britain whatever the Government's stance.

Tidy Britain campaigners dish dirt on the litter of Wakefield

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

WAKEFIELD has emerged as the filthiest place in Britain with Bath, Solihull and the City of London among the cleanest, according to a survey published today by the Tidy Britain Group.

A study of the levels of litter on pavements and streets around some of the nation's town halls blacklists 24 councils for having unacceptable levels of crisp packets, cigarette ends and other rubbish.

The findings, based on a survey of more than 18,000 sites in nearly 80 cities and metropolitan borough councils, indicate that some authorities take litter far more seriously than others. Places

such as Bath, Ripon, Solihull and Exeter scored between 70 and 82 out of 100 for their relatively high levels of cleanliness. Wakefield scored the lowest with 45, with Sheffield on 49 and South Tyneside and South Shields getting 50.

A spokesman for the group said it was clear that cities and boroughs could improve litter levels if they wished. Manchester, classed as both a city and a metropolitan borough, was surveyed twice. It came bottom in 1994 with a score of 51. But 12 months later it has sprouted up the cleanliness table and now ranks nearly ten points higher.

Overall only 10 per cent of the sites were litter-free. Seventy-five per cent had a scattering of small items. 12 per cent had accumulations of

litter, and 3 per cent were said to be strewn with items. More than 15 per cent of sites had graffiti, and fly-posting affected 10 per cent of sites.

Professor Graham Ashworth, director-general of the group, said yesterday: "There is clearly no room for complacency. What this research shows is the necessity for personal responsibility for litter."

The group, in its *State of the Nation Report 1996*, has also surveyed public attitudes to litter. Dog droppings rank as the most offensive item with 80 per cent of those questioned citing them as the worst problem. This is despite only 7.25 per cent of sites being affected.

The most loathed litter was fast-food packaging, named

by 72 per cent of respondents, followed by drink cans (63 per cent), cigarette ends (40 per cent) and sweet wrappers (25 per cent).

The group found that the most frequently found item is cigarette-related litter, with 86 per cent of sites affected, while only 13 per cent were blighted by fast-food packaging.

More than 90 per cent of the public are aware that there are fines for dropping litter but only 3 per cent thought the fine was more than £1,000. It is actually £2,500.

More than 63 per cent of the 1,137 people questioned said that they had cleaned up litter themselves, while 19 per cent said they had called the council. But only 1 per cent had decided to report the matter to their MP.

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Brutal reminder for the tourist town that forgot murder existed

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Cousins go to court over ancient earldom and a fortune



Staking claim: Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

TWO cousins from Scotland's premier family met in court yesterday to compete for the title of Earl of Selkirk and a £500,000 fortune.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton, cousin of the Duke of Hamilton, brought an action in the ancient court of Lord Lyon in Edinburgh claiming he is the rightful heir to the 10th Earl of Selkirk, who died over a year ago aged 88.

Mr Douglas-Hamilton's claim is being opposed by Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, younger brother of the Duke of Hamilton and MP for Edinburgh West. Lord James Hamilton, a Scottish Office Minister, disclaimed the title of Earl of

Selkirk four days after the tenth Earl's death to allow him to remain a Conservative MP and to vote for the Government in the crucial European Finance Bill. Had he not disclaimed the title immediately, the Government would have faced a by-election.

Although Lord James Hamilton, 53, cannot now become Earl of Selkirk he is fighting the case on behalf of his son, John Andrew, 17, who will become Master of Selkirk if Lord James wins and will inherit the earldom on his father's death.

The two cousins, accompanied by their wives, exchanged pleasantries and shook hands before the case began yesterday. The hearing was presided over by Lord Lyon King of Arms, Sir Malcolm Innes of

Edingight. Lord Lyon Court sits in chambers every day and traditionally adjudicates on disputed titles. It only rarely hears cases in public.

While the cousins insist their fight is friendly both were represented by QCs and are going to considerable expense to stake their claim.

The earldom of Selkirk was created by King Charles I in 1646 and bestowed on the king's cousin Lord William Douglas. But the case hinges on the interpretation of a document written in Latin in 1688 stipulating who may inherit.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton's claim to the title is on the basis that he is the eldest son of the earl's younger brother Malcolm. His case is that the diploma of 1688 intended that the titles of Hamilton and

Selkirk should remain separate and that all existing male descendants of the earl's brother should be exhausted before the earldom reverts to the Duke of Hamilton.

Lord James argues that the diploma of 1688 makes it clear that if the Earl of Selkirk dies with no male children and no younger brothers, the title reverts to the Duke of Hamilton and is passed to his immediate younger brother. Lord James is the immediate young brother of the current Duke.

Lord James is often described as the nicest man in the Commons. He lives in a mansion overlooking the sea at North Berwick and is the father of four children, including twins. He was educated at Eton and

Oxford where he gained a boxing Blue and he has published several books on flying.

Alasdair Douglas-Hamilton, 56, was educated at Gordonstoun and studied law at Edinburgh. He is a manager in the trustees department of the Bank of Scotland. His father, Lord Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, was briefly Tory MP for Inverness-shire. Lord Malcolm was killed in an aircraft crash in the Cameroon jungle in 1964.

Mr Douglas-Hamilton has four children and lives in a fortified tower set in 20 acres in the Scottish border town of St Boswells.

Lord Lyon heard both sides' arguments yesterday and a judgment is expected within three months.



Fighting for son: Lord James Douglas-Hamilton

'Britain has got to do better'

Water industry is incompetent, says Princess Royal

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE Princess Royal criticised the water industry yesterday for allowing a year of supply shortages in a country with abundant rainfall.

Even taking into account the past year's unusual weather conditions, Britain was facing a situation that no one would have thought possible ten years ago, she said. "I cannot help feeling that there must have been inefficiency and incompetence."

Water companies say that last summer's drought was the worst in more than 100 years and that they cannot always maintain supplies in such conditions.

The Princess made her remarks in an address to the annual Oxford Farming Conference in which she singled out water supplies as the most crucial determinant of the world's ability to grow crops for an expanding population.

One of the most useful contributions the West could make would be to provide developing countries with the expertise to enable them to use limited water resources wisely, the Princess told farmers.

bankers and businessmen attending the conference. But the West's ability to help would be undermined if even countries such as Britain could not manage their water resources properly. "What can we say to people [in Africa] who have very little water?", she said. "We have got to do better."

In a later interview with the BBC, the Princess said: "In the UK we always thought the climate would provide enough water for us, and we are not paying strict enough attention to the increases in uses of water and the way in which it should be used."

Elsewhere in her speech to the conference, the Princess, who is president of Save the Children, said that developing countries should not simply copy the worst aspects of the highly intensive agriculture, dependent on large amounts of fertilisers and pesticides, from which farmers in the West were now trying to escape. "We do not want developing countries to make the same mistakes as we did," she said. "The trouble is that

they see their mistakes as the quickest way to get a return."

Earlier, Eugene Moos, the United States Under-Secretary for Agriculture, gave a warning that the world could face food shortages over the coming years. "Given the expanding import demand in Asian markets, the economic growth in developing countries, Latin America, Central Europe and the States of the former Soviet Union, we are moving away from a world surplus situation to an era of growing demand," he said.

The Princess's strictures came as Ian Byatt, the water industry regulator, threatened to take a tough line with water companies that tried to avoid paying compensation for supply cuts because of burst pipes and mains in the recent thaw.

Yorkshire Water has promised to pay £10 compensation to customers who were without supplies for more than 24 hours as a result of the bursts. A Leeds city councillor, John Sully, called the figure an "insult" and business leaders in the city condemned it as inadequate.



Anthea Turner, the lottery draw TV presenter, gets a security escort and a £60 million backdrop of prizemoney at the Royal Bank of Scotland yesterday

Lottery punters are playing for £60 million

BY LEVIA LINTON

CAMELOT put £60 million on display yesterday to show the nation what it would be playing for in this weekend's lottery. Deep below the Royal Bank of Scotland in north London, bundles of £10 notes were piled 5ft 4in high, 13ft 6in wide and 3ft 4in deep. Camelot will not pay out in cash, however. Winners will get cheques ready for instant clearance.

Ronald Biggs, who took part in the

Great Train Robbery and remembered how it felt to count £1 million in cash, said from his exile in Brazil yesterday: "It didn't make me happy." He spoke of his reaction to his big cash haul: "I started out with exactly £147,000 and began giving it away until I reached £100,000 and put the brakes on and told myself to stop being so silly. I admire generosity and like to feel I am a generous man."

Four out of five adults in Britain are expected to take part in this weekend's

National Lottery. Hundreds of companies, including building societies, solicitors, architects, engineering and printing firms, have taken out insurance with Fielding Mann, a firm of brokers in Leeds, against workplace syndicates winning the jackpot and staff walking out. A policy offers between £25,000 and £300,000 cover against two or more employees walking out for an annual premium of between £50 and £300.

Nigel Benbow, of the Institute of

Management, said that the 14 million-to-1 risk was so slight that most bosses would be better off joining the syndicate and spending the insurance premium to keep their staff loyal.

Ticket sales are expected to top £80 million. Virginia Bottomley, National Heritage Secretary, defended the huge jackpot, saying that it would mean more money for good causes. "I think the size of the prize is part of the fun of the game," she told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

Church charity to sue priest for missing money

BY STEPHEN FARRELL AND RUTH GLEDHILL

THE governors of a Church charity are to take an Anglican priest and a Labour Party agent to court to recover missing funds after a Charity Commission inquiry exposed "a web of conflicts of interest, patronage and nepotism".

The Rev Graham Pattison faces eviction today from The Master's House at Sherburn Hospital, Durham city. He was given eight weeks' notice in November but last night there was no sign of him leaving. Governors of Sherburn Hospital, now an old people's home, will decide what to do at a special meeting on Tuesday if the priest, his wife, Valerie, and their two adult sons are not prepared to leave. Mr Pattison, 56, has refused to comment since Charity Commissioners criticised him and another governor for using hospital funds to buy expensive cars and a pension for his wife.

A hospital source said: "The governors will do whatever it takes to get him out. They will get a county court judgment, get the bailiffs in, anything. He says he has nowhere to go but we do not believe him."

"He was paid £12,000 a year and his wife was paid £35,000. You are not telling me that after all those years and those salaries he hasn't put something aside."

Stephen Black, administrator of Sherburn Hospital, said: "Our solicitor will be instructing a barrister on the governors' behalf to proceed with a civil claim. There is a board of governors in place now with a resolve to ensure that what has happened never happens again."

Although Alan Martin, the investigating commissioner, found no evidence of dishonesty on the part of Mr Pattison or Ron Morrissey, the agent for the City of Durham's Labour MP, he urged the governors to seek restitution of £42,000 not accounted for.

Between 1986 and 1988, donations of £42,000 were paid into a private account, Interchurch Agency Fees,

which was never audited and whose signatories were Mr Pattison and Mr Morrissey. In spite of repeated requests Mr Pattison failed to explain how the money was used, raising "very serious doubts about the possible misuse of charity funds", according to the committee's report.

Three vehicles, including a Daihatsu Four Trak, were donated to Interchurch by the charity and the Four Trak was sold by Mr Morrissey within a few months. The report says: "There is clear evidence that no donations were needed by Interchurch/Skill Training."

Interchurch was able to invest £700,000 in a Spanish property development company in 1989.

The Interchurch Agency Fees account was also used to buy cars for senior managers and Mr Morrissey received extra monthly payments of £300 to £350.

Another project, Compass, received £230,000 in grants from Sherburn Hospital but no audited accounts were presented. The committee could find no evidence of how £175,000 paid in direct grants to Compass was spent. The committee noted "with concern" that the Compass project worker was Mr Morrissey's wife, Doris. The committee also expressed "grave concern" that £100,000 was paid over three years to establish a pension for Mrs Pattison.

Because of an endowment, the hospital, run as a home for about 90 old people, has 2,500 acres of farmland, £10 million in investments as well as mineral-rich land. The hospital buildings are worth more than £12 million.

Throughout the 1980s Mr Morrissey was chairman of the charity and Mr Pattison its master. The hospital is run by a board of 16 governors. The Bishop of Durham, although lacking administrative power, appoints the master from a list of three given him by the governors, and hears an appeal by the master if dismissed by the governors.

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One murder count dropped at magistrates' court

Retired carpenter accused of killing three in war atrocities

By Bill Frost

ONE of the four charges of murder against the first man in Britain to face prosecution for alleged Nazi atrocities committed in German-occupied Eastern Europe was dropped yesterday when he appeared in court.

Szymon Serafinowicz, an 85-year-old retired carpenter, remains accused under the War Crimes Act, 1991, of killing three unknown Jews in Belarus — part of the former Soviet Union — between November 1941 and March 1942. No plea was entered for any of the charges yesterday as committal proceedings began, but his lawyer made plain at an earlier hearing that they would be vigorously defended.

In the unlikely setting of Dorking Magistrates' Court in Surrey, Mr Serafinowicz, a widower, squinted and blinked as the clerk asked him

committal proceedings against Rosemary West last February, had told the media that dire penalties were in store for those who flouted his instructions. "Heavy fines or imprisonment could result," he said, frowning over his spectacles.

Mr Serafinowicz, allegedly a commander in the local police in Byelorussia, came to Britain as a refugee in 1947. He was charged in July, the first person to face charges under the War Crimes Act 1991, after a two-year investigation by Scotland Yard's war crimes unit.

Yesterday Mr Serafinowicz, dressed in a shabby car coat, pullover and thick cotton shirt, frequently had difficulty hearing — cupping his hand to his ear and frowning — as the case against him was made by John Nutting, QC, for the prosecution.

Last night Mr Serafinowicz's bail was renewed on condition that he does not leave Britain, does not apply for a passport and continues to live at his present address in Banstead, Surrey. The hearing was adjourned until February 19 to allow witnesses to travel to Britain.

Court officials have been told that up to 26 witnesses, from Russia, the United States and Israel, would be called. The Crown Prosecution Service will have to arrange for interpreters in at least four languages.

Committal proceedings at Dorking are expected to last until April and will cost an estimated £1.5 million. A media annex with an audio link has been set up to accommodate the throng of reporters covering the case.

Dorking appears unmoved at being chosen as the venue for Britain's first War Crimes prosecution. The only evidence that the town is interested can be found in telephone kiosks near the court.

A right-wing organisation styling itself The Voice of Reason has put up cheaply printed stickers reading: "No War Crimes trials! Hands off OAPs. We want British justice — not Zionist vengeance."



Szymon Serafinowicz arriving at Dorking Magistrates' Court in Surrey yesterday



to confirm his name. Clearly in some difficulty, he cupped a hand to his ear and she repeated the question loudly.

Closing his eyes against the powerful ceiling lights, he confirmed his name, address and date of birth. He was then told that one of four counts of killing Jews after the German invasion of Belarus had been withdrawn.

The frail pensioner had been driven into a rear courtyard of the courthouse in the back of a police Rover past a posse of photographers and TV cameramen.

Peter Badge, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, told the press — foreign journalists in particular — that the factors behind the withdrawal of the charge could not be reported for legal reasons. Earlier, Mr Badge, who was involved in

Six million fighting at the frontier

By Richard Ford

ON June 22, 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, a surprise attack on Stalin's Russia, his former ally. Armies of three million men on either side, with air and naval backing, faced each other on the German-Russian frontier. During the first

weeks of the war on the Eastern Front, the German army made sweeping advances, achieved vast encirclements of Russian troops and took thousands of prisoners.

The bulk of the German army was to break the Soviet force in Byelorussia and then assist in clearing the Baltic area and capturing Lenin-

grad. Hitler's attack began with air attacks which destroyed the bulk of the Soviet air force and disrupted headquarters and supply dumps.

In six days, the Germans had enveloped Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, and captured 280,000 men. But soon the German army was confronting the problems of its

initial successes with stretched supply lines and Soviet troops still capable of resistance.

By December leading elements of the German army were almost at the city limits of Moscow but Stalin launched a counter-offensive and by the spring of 1942 both sides had fought each other to a standstill.

GEOGRAPHERS' CONFERENCE

Supermarkets 'damage British fruit growers'

REPORTS BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

BRITISH supermarkets were accused yesterday of bullying tactics that were destroying the horticultural industry and forcing customers to pay inflated prices for fruit and vegetables.

Caroline Dumontell of the science policy research unit at Sussex University told the conference at the University of Strathclyde that the dominance of a few supermarket chains was making it harder and harder for small growers of fruit and vegetables to make a living.

The supermarkets, led by Sainsbury's and Tesco, preferred to buy from abroad, and refused to give British growers secure contracts, she said. As a result, the number of horticultural holdings had declined by a fifth between 1987 and 1993, and fresh fruit and vegetables were the largest single item in Britain's trade deficit.

By buying direct from suppliers, the supermarkets had undermined the wholesale markets through which growers had once been able to sell their produce. In 1974, she said, there had been 150 main wholesale markets in Britain; now there were only 37. Of the 11,000 growers left,

she estimates that only about 2,000 who sell to supermarkets are very profitable. The rest must find markets through farm shops, or the declining number of small greengrocers.

She said that in spite of the tough tactics used by the supermarkets, British consumers pay more for fruit and vegetables than those in other countries.

"It doesn't deliver the cheapest produce to the shopper," she said. "Actually fruit and vegetables are quite expensive here. The profit margins have been exorbitant."

The dominance of the supermarkets was increasing, she said. In the 1970s they had about a quarter of the trade in fresh fruit and vegetables, but now they had 60 per cent. This is predicted to rise to 80 per cent by 2000.

Apple-growing had been one of the principal casualties, she said. "France has replaced the indigenous apple producers. In the last year, 14 per cent of British apple orchards were grubbed up, after the Government introduced grants for growers wanting to get out of apple-growing." Ms

Dumontell's study is based on questionnaires sent to 255 growers around the country and face-to-face interviews with supermarket buyers, importers and others.

One of the main problems faced by British growers was the lack of binding contracts with the supermarkets. "What they do is have discussions in the down-season and give vague undertakings to buy."

"But when the time comes they can say they don't want the produce, because the weather is cold, or because they have just had a consignment from Chile," she said.

They could not be so high-handed with foreign suppliers, as once the produce had been imported they had no option but to sell it. With British producers it was too easy simply to turn their products away.

Ms Dumontell also said the pressure was leading to unhealthy production practices, with the same crops being grown on the same land year after year. This could lead to disease and the spread of pests.

Weekend Shopping, page 8

Secret of long life lies in the value of your house

IF YOU want to know how long somebody is going to live, look at the value of their house, the conference was told yesterday.

Dr Daniel Dorling of the University of Bristol has compared the health and longevity of people throughout England and Wales with their wealth, as measured by the value of their houses. His results show that greater wealth means longer life and allow him to predict, for each group, how much longer they would live if they were a little richer.

His figures are based on building society records, so only include those with mortgages. In the poorest electoral

wards, the average equity people have in their houses is less than £100; in the richest, around the outskirts of London, it is more than £120,000.

Those in the poorest wards live on average for 72.5 years (men and women taken together) while those in the richest ones 74.1 years. The greatest gains in life expectancy are made by the poor who gain a little more wealth.

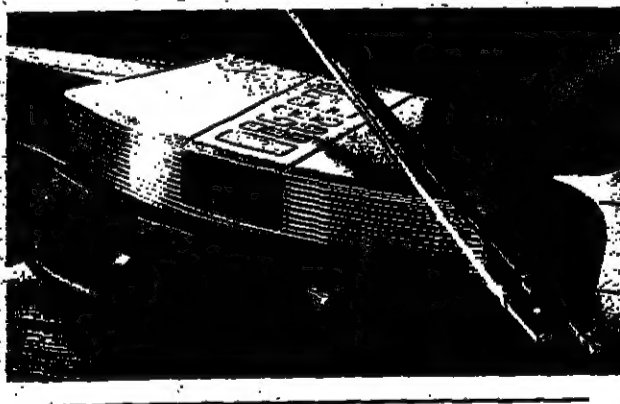
"Where the average equity is less than £15,000, every extra £100 adds a day's life expectancy," he concluded. "But among the richer people living in wards where the average equity is more

than £60,000, an extra £100 adds only three hours to life expectancy."

Ugandan Asians who arrived in Britain in 1972 with £50 in their pockets have since made rapid progress up the social ladder, a study at the University of Wales in Swansea has shown. While a quarter of the Ugandan Asian men were classified as managerial in 1981, by 1991 that had risen to 37 per cent. Ugandan Asian women in managerial positions showed an increase from 6 per cent to 24 per cent over the same period, while the proportion of white men so classified rose from 23 to 28 per cent.

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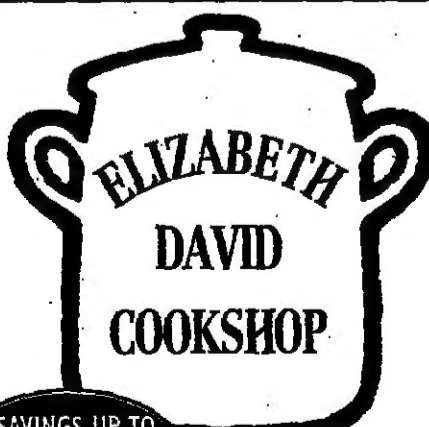
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From ancient Assyria to laser surgery, the eyes have it

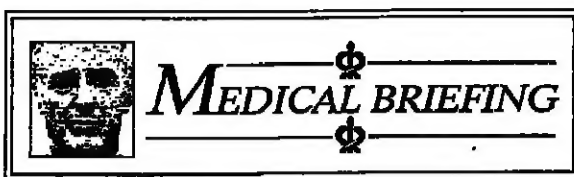
A pair of spectacles recovered at low tide from the Thames foreshore has been dated to about 1500 and ranks as about the oldest surviving pair in Europe.

Spectacles were invented in Italy in 1285, although simple lenses made of various materials were well established in ancient Rome and have been found in the ruins of Carthage and at Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria.

The Thameside spectacles were of a simple practical design, probably uncomfortable to wear, and certainly

not intended in any way as a fashion accessory as modern versions now are. Robert Chappell, a member of the council of the College of Optometrists and an expert on the intricacies of spectacle manufacture, said that although today's choice had never been greater the difference in the spectacle frames was now one of appearance rather than practicality.

It is, in fact, now more difficult to find a comfortable pair than it was 30 years ago. In the past, before spectacles were regularly changed by their owners to keep up with



Dr Thomas Stuttford

fashion, they were available in several different breadths and with different arm lengths. They were also manufactured with varying bridge sizes to accommodate those who had small or large noses. Now spectacles are

made with only one standard bridge size, in two breadths and the patient has the choice of either a long or a short arm.

made. A pair made of the newest, lightest and most fashionable material, titanium, will cost about £300, while £1,000 would buy some gold ones and for rather more Cartier is pleased to supply gold frames studded with diamonds. The best value for money must still be the rolled gold NHS style half moons at about £95. They take some finding but Mr Chappell says that they are still available.

Nero used a polished, shaped emerald to view the gladiators fighting but many rich and well-educated Romans dispensed with spec-

cles and hired a young man to read their manuscripts aloud. The rich are once again able to throw away their spectacles, relying on laser therapy rather than having someone to do their reading for them.

John Grindle, a consultant ophthalmic surgeon who practises in London, said that, by altering the shape of the cornea with laser therapy, 95 per cent of those who are considered suitable for surgery, and who have a refractory error of less than minus three, can do without glasses. The success rate falls as the

degree of short sightedness increases but minor changes in the laser have extended its use so that now 90 per cent of those who have severe short sightedness — up to minus ten — can benefit from laser treatment at a cost of only £395 an eye and can expect afterwards only to have to wear spectacles for watching television, using a computer or driving.

The skill in obtaining consistently good results and the satisfaction of the patient depends on selecting only those people for surgery who are going to benefit. This skill

requires an understanding of human nature as well as of eye diseases. Some patients attribute all their misfortunes in life, social, sexual and professional, to having to wear glasses and are inordinately upset when their world is not revolutionised after the glasses become redundant.

Research is well advanced into using the laser to provide older people with bifocal corneas. This is not yet available but Mr Grindle confidently predicts that the time is not far off when it may be possible to dispense with half moons.

Funding squeeze angers academics

Universities may cut student intake as cash runs out

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

UNIVERSITIES are threatening to admit more foreign students and turn away British undergraduates this year in protest at a government funding squeeze.

A growing number of vice-chancellors are rallying behind a plan that would lead them to clash with ministers and end an era of growth, which has seen university places increase by 50 per cent since 1989. A few favour the more radical alternative of charging all students direct "top-up" fees, depending on the cost of their course.

Both moves will be debated at an emergency meeting of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals on February 2. The Budget imposed a cut in funding of 7 per cent in real terms in the next academic year, after a 25 per cent reduction over the past five years. Capital funding was cut by 31 per cent from £350 million to £243 million as the Treasury found extra money for schools.

John Bull, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Plymouth, said: "If there is no more money from the public purse I would prefer to explore ways

in which there could be a deal with the custodians of the public purse to agree there will be fewer students for that money."

Universities are free to charge a market rate for non-European Community students, who pay for themselves or are funded by their Government. Annual course fees for British students are fixed by the Government at £750 for classroom-based subjects, £1,600 for laboratory or workshop-based courses and £2,800 for clinical courses. The committee estimates the true cost of these courses as £6,000, £8,000 and £14,500 respectively.

A committee spokesman said: "Vice-chancellors are incensed. They realise they cannot go on any longer providing high-quality higher education for the amount of money the Government provides." Universities are now preparing bids to the Higher Education Funding Council to cut numbers of British undergraduates. They can only do so with funding council approval but were helped when, immediately after the Budget, the council said it

would accept applications for a cut of 3,000 students. The deadline is February 9.

Graeme Davies, principal of Glasgow University and former chief executive of the funding council, said: "Universities can raise more money or recruit fewer students and these are the two alternatives we have in mind. We can seek top-up fees or to take more high-resource students from abroad."

James Wright, Vice-Chancellor at Newcastle, said: "I think the key issue we are down to is that we need to make students pay for all of their maintenance and maybe an additional fee. But it has got to be with a decent loans scheme, not the mess we have at the moment."

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats are preparing to ditch their traditional support for student grants to cover the cost of living, in exchange for a commitment to revive the expansion of higher education. The Liberal Democrats said students would be required to make a contribution to the costs of their education.

Education, page 29



Stephen Barlow, the new artistic director of Opera Northern Ireland, with his wife Joanna Lumley in Belfast yesterday

Artistic director will take opera to the people

THE conductor Stephen Barlow has been appointed artistic director of Opera Northern Ireland. It was announced yesterday, the fourth birthday of the company. As part of a strategy to bring opera closer to the people, Opera Northern Ireland is to develop community projects to appoint a full-time officer to take opera into the schools to

do more touring, north and south of the border and to encourage backing from business people. Barlow, who is 40, is perceived as being out of reach of many people, both financially and intellectually. I am a huge challenge as a conductor. It will take time, but I'm confident Opera Northern Ireland has the strategy to do it."

Barlow, who has worked with the main opera houses and orchestras in this country, and also abroad, is the founder of the company Opera 80, now known as Northern Touring Opera. In 1994 he conducted Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* for Opera Northern Ireland, and last year led a gala concert in Belfast featuring the soprano Lesley Garrett.

Tests fail to explain jet's roll mystery

Hopes that a sudden and unexplained roll in a British Airways Boeing 737 could hold the key to at least two fatal crashes of similar aircraft have been dashed by air accident investigators.

The pilot of the jet was so concerned when it went into a series of violent movements during a flight test that he declared an emergency and called "mayday." Although the rolls and yaws went on for seven minutes the crew landed the jet safely at Gatwick.

Exhaustive attempts were made to re-create the problem in flight, but it did not recur and no reason has been found. The aircraft remains grounded, almost three months later, and a full investigation is continuing. Investigators say, however, there were significant differences between the incident at 10,000ft over Bournemouth and two crashes in America in 1991 and 1994 when 737s yawed and rolled and plunged out of control.

New horizon

Samantha Brewster, 28, has restarted her 27,000-mile "wrong way" round-the-world solo sailing voyage from Brazil. She is heading for the Southern Ocean after mast failure halted the trip a month ago. The new start-finish line, a 125ft rock off the Brazilian port of Santos, has been designated by the World Sailing Speed Records Council.

Heroin seized

Heroin with a street value of £1.75 million was found on a cargo ship at an east coast port yesterday. Police said the 21kg were hidden in a gas bottle on a ship loaded with phosphates that arrived in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. All 13 crew of the *MY Craignor*, which came from Pakistan, via Morocco and Portugal, are being questioned.

Vet left £1m

The man who was the model for the character Siegfried Farnon in the James Herriot vet books left an estate worth £1.15 million net. Donald Sinclair, of Thirby, North Yorkshire, who was played by Robert Hardy in the television series, died aged 84 last June. He was a vet and partner of Alf Wight, who wrote under the name of Herriot.

Ariane launch set

The European Space Agency has successfully tested the supercooled engines of the new Ariane space rocket. The launch is due in the summer from Kourou in French Guiana. The Ariane booster will first be used to launch the "cluster" mission — a flotilla of four spacecraft which will study the Earth's magnetic field.

Miniature motor is a giant leap for technology

By NICK NUTTALL

SCIENTISTS in America have developed an engine the size of a grain of pollen, making possible a hitherto world of midsize machines.

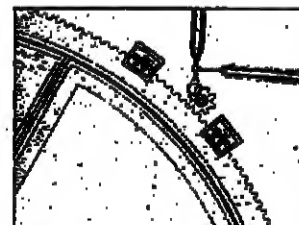
The engine, developed in New Mexico, is said to be simple enough to be mass-produced but complex enough to be useful. Manufacture opens the possibility to such science-fiction-like creations as a tiny robot capable of navigating the human body to clear cholesterol or repairing torn ligaments or nerves. Other hoped-for "nanotechnology" gadgets include man-made insects that are able to buzz around the garden killing real pests and ones that work in the house cleaning dust from floors.

Micro-motors could also be used for low-cost gyroscopes which could have a big impact on the design of cars and military systems, offering highly accurate guidance.

Jeff Sniegowski, of the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, one of the scientists involved, said yesterday: "We believe we are the first to demonstrate a really good micromotor that can connect up with a variety of devices."

"Our idea was to develop a generic micromotor that has a gear output, so people see there's a power source they can hook up an application to."

Neil Singer, also of the laboratories, said one of the



The tiny silicon motor

first applications might be for internal drug pumps in which the micromotor could release tiny amounts of drugs or hormones directly into an organ or the patient's bloodstream.

The motor, which is a millimetre square, has been made from silicon and, like mass-produced microchips used in computers, can be etched with acid or light. It is made of gears, the smallest of which is the diameter of a human hair and can spin at 200,000 revolutions a minute. The gears are connected to drive shafts, as in a conventional engine, and are powerful enough to turn other gears up to 30 times bigger. The motor can develop 0.5 microwatts of electricity.

The team hopes to combine the motor with an electronic chip circuit to give it computer intelligence. At present the device is run on electricity but scientists are trying to power the motor by using the temperature changes that occur when water droplets evaporate off the gears and drive shafts.



Chilli Bouchier in the 1936 film *Gypsy*, left. The cover picture of her book, right, was too daring for 1931

Getty's birthday gift helps silent star shine

BRITAIN'S first screen sex symbol is publishing her autobiography at the age of 86, thanks to a birthday gift from the tycoon John Paul Getty Jr.

Chilli Bouchier, who appeared in 13 silent films and 45 talkies, used a £5,000 cheque from Getty, a film enthusiast and most of her life savings to produce *Shooting Star*, which will be issued next month to mark the centenary of the cinema. "Publishers were doubtful about the cost because I wanted a lot of photographs, so I thought, to hell with it, I'll publish it myself," she

said. The cover shows the young Chilli revealing her breasts, a pose from the film *Carnival*. The picture is modest by today's standards but in 1931 many newspapers considered it too daring for publication.

Chilli hopes that Mohamed Al Fayed will offer her a launch party at Harrods, where as chairman he welcomed her on her 80th birthday, 64 years after she was fired as the store's model. At 16, she was seduced by one of its floorwalkers. She then saw an advertisement which said: "We make film stars: price three guineas."

Drive to save violet click beetle

By NICK NUTTALL

WILDLIFE conservationists are to spend £15,000 planting 300 trees in Hereford and Worcester to save a rare and secretive jumping insect.

The violet click beetle is found at only two sites in

chalk grassland. The hill also has hawthorn, which provides nectar and a mating site for beetles in the spring.

But planting last took place 200 years ago at the 380-acre site and many oaks were felled in the Second World War for timber and fuel. English Na-

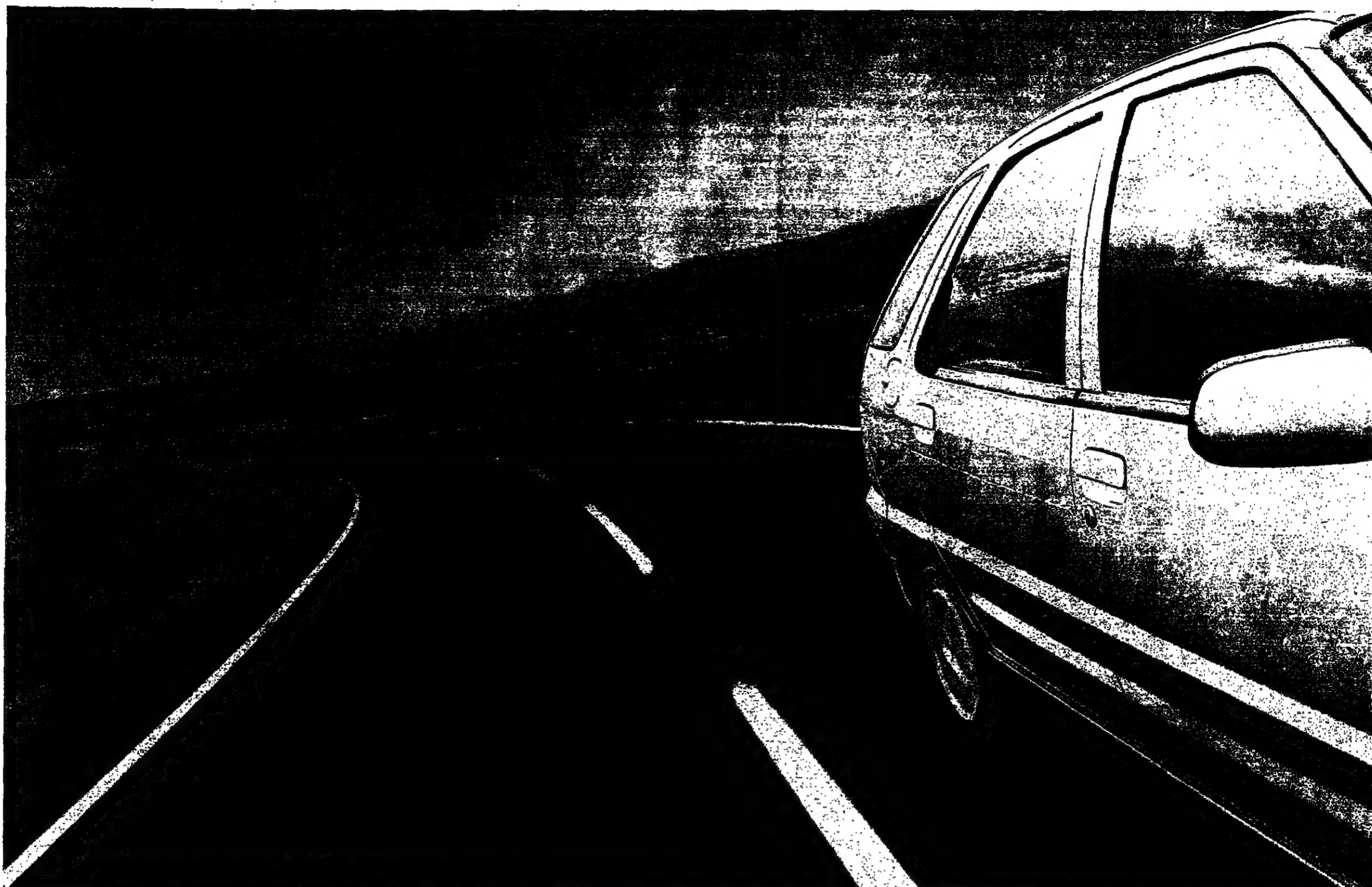
tional Trust is funding the project.

But planting last took place 200 years ago at the 380-acre site and many oaks were felled in the Second World War for timber and fuel. English Na-

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مركز امت الأمل

Parties wield statistical weapons in economic battle

Under Tony Blair, new Labour has been challenging the Tories' reputation for economic stewardship. Janet Bush says that the case can be argued two ways

The Government and Labour have locked horns on what both believe will be the critical battleground of the election campaign: the economy. The chosen weapons are statistics, marshalled by both sides in recent days in full-page newspaper advertisements.

In *The Sunday Times*, John Major asked "Which Country?" was, for example, Europe's largest exporter of televisions and computers, or had the lowest tax burden of any major European country. After a list of 14 glowing economic facts, he answered himself in suitably patriotic terms: "Our Country".

Labour pounced, reusing the advertisement originally placed in this newspaper last November that formed the basis of its pre-Budget assault on the Government. In yesterday's *Independent*, it published part of a table showing that Britain had slipped from 13th place in 1979 to 18th place now in the world prosperity

league. Both combatants are eager to campaign on the economy, perhaps with an eye to Bill Clinton's election-winning slogan in his 1992 campaign for the US presidency: "It's the economy, stupid." Each side is confident that this is winning territory.

This marks another key change to Labour's tactics under Tony Blair. Privately, both Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, were disappointed by the approach adopted by Mr Brown's predecessor, John Smith, during the 1992 general election campaign of concentrating on traditional Labour issues such as health and education and trying to neutralise the economy as an issue. Three-and-a-half years on, Labour is no longer confident that it can compete with the Tories on their long-held reputation of being the most trusted stewards of the economy.

But Conservative Central Office appears unfazed, pro-

WORLD PROSPERITY LEAGUE	
14	Netherlands
15	Australia
16	Hong Kong
17	Singapore
18	United Kingdom
19	Sweden
20	New Zealand

Adverts placed by Labour, left, and the Tories argue their economic case

feeling itself delighted that Labour has been drawn on to the one subject on which it feels it can conceivably win the election. President Clinton has moved on to foreign policy as a potential second-term winner. However, the risks for John Major of campaigning on peace in Bosnia or Northern Ireland are too great to contemplate. So the

battle of the statistics has only just begun. Statistics being as flexible a tool as they are — for every positive figure, there is an equally compelling negative qualification, for every way of looking at it — there is considerable ammunition for both sides. Labour won the first round

with its prosperity league table at the beginning of November. It took care to use impeccable sources, quoting directly from figures provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the very group that government ministers have cited recently to laud Britain's economic miracle since 1979. Unfortunately for Angela

Knight, the Treasury Minister who dismissed the figures as nonsense the morning after they appeared, they had been reproduced in Michael Heseltine's own paper on competitiveness in May. The startled Deputy Prime Minister was forced to admit on the BBC at lunchtime that the figures were, unfortunately, correct.

The only liberty that Labour took with the OECD's figures was to include Singapore and Hong Kong — neither of which are in the OECD — above Britain in the rankings. This demoted the UK to 18th rather than 16th place. However, this adjustment was made after consultation with the International Monetary Fund and was given credibility by the annual competitiveness scoreboard published by the World Economic Forum, an influential Swiss group. Its table placed the two Far Eastern powerhouses in second and third places respectively on its table of 49 countries. In this version of the statistical truth, Britain also came 18th.

The Treasury has understandably been rather dismayed about Mr Heseltine's championing of annual competitive reports because they tell a rather negative story.

When Central Office produced its own advertisement on Sunday, it ignored the whole issue, focusing instead on its own pot-pourri of positive statistics. All 14 items are as true as Labour's offering is impeccably sourced. But interpretation is the name of the game in economics.

It is true that Britain had the lowest unemployment rate of any major European country in 1995 — but only if you accord "major" status solely to Germany, France and Italy. If other economies are included, British unemployment is higher than that of The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland and Austria.

It is correct that Britain is enjoying the longest period with low inflation for the past 50 years. But compare its record with the two "major" European economies, and Britain has had higher average inflation over the past half-century than both Germany and France.

For their part, the Conservatives dismissed Labour's assault on competitiveness grounds as cheap rubbishing of their achievements. The OECD may say that Britain has fallen behind, but there is

plenty the Government can shout about which statistics may not reflect: its determination not to allow the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty and the minimum wage to destroy jobs; its successful assault on trade union power; its ability to attract foreign companies to Britain; the efficiency gains of privatisation.

For all that new Labour has dared to fight on the economy, the battle-lines are still quite traditional. Labour, with its accent on industry, investment and trading performance, has chosen competitiveness as its standard. The Conservatives are appealing to consumers, talking about low interest rates and low taxes. They had been planning their advertisement for some time but were afraid that its upbeat tone would provoke derisive laughter in a distinctly feel-bad electorate — until now.

Whether these statistical blasts and counter-blasts become the stuff of bar-room debate or are dismissed as "lies, damn lies and statistics" is a question the spin doctors will have to answer in due course.

Leading article, page 15

THE WORLD'S GREATEST

SALE



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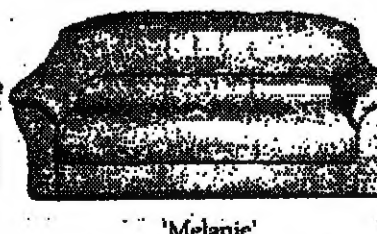
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£995

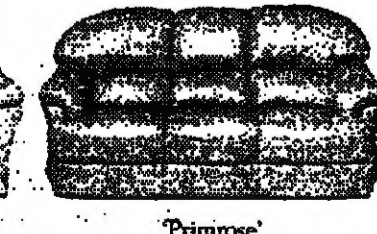
3-SEAT SOFA + 2 ARMCHAIRS WAS £1295 NOW £1195



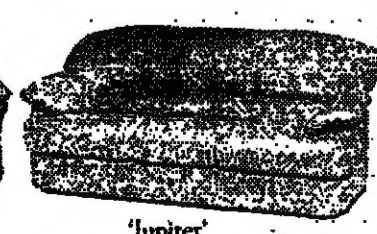
'Delsmere' 3-seat sofa + 2 armchairs £2695 £2295



'Melanie' 3-seat sofa + 2 armchairs £1295 £1495



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Northampton Bridge Street
Nottingham Huntingdon Street
Wolverhampton Stafford Street

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Bathurst Retail World, Parkgate

NORTH EAST
Gateshead Retail World, Team Valley

NORTH WEST
Chester The Greyhound Park, Sealand Road
Liverpool 455 Edge Lane, (1 ml. from M62)
Manchester 96 Cheetham Hill Road

SCOTLAND
Glasgow Great Western Retail Park, Great Western Road



Handle chicken with care to cut poisoning risk

WEEKEND SHOPPING

A REPORT in *Which?* claiming that many Class A chickens are so poorly gutted that they pose a health risk emphasises the importance of choosing chickens carefully and handling them hygienically at home.

Avoid chickens that show signs of bruising, thick skin or unplucked feathers. When unwrapping, check the body cavity for cleanliness, and wash your hands before handling other food or kitchen equipment. Keep the bird out of contact with other food and ensure that it is cooked thoroughly by following the guidelines on the packaging. Good hygiene at home should eliminate the risk of food poisoning.

If you wish to turn to fish as an alternative, though, the week's best buy is herrings, which are plump and full of flavour at present, and low in price at 90p a pound. They are delicious grilled with a little lemon and olive oil, or dipped in oatmeal and shallow fried. Advertised supermarket promotions include:

Asda: fresh diced turkey thigh £2.18 a kg, fresh pork spare rib £2.39 a kg, fresh lamb shoulder £3.05 a kg, green seedless

grapes £1.39 a lb, cherry tomatoes 79p a punnet. Badgers: fresh 2.3kg chicken £3.39, broccoli 75p for 500g, traditionally made crumpets 23p for six.

Harrods: whole Scottish kippers £7.25 for 3.2kg box, sliced smoked salmon £18 for three 227g packets, freshly cooked lobsters £30 for four, beef biltong sticks £2.25 for 100g. Iceland: lower fat breaded cod £1.99 for 575g, boned kippers £1.49 for 680g, boneless chicken breast £3.99 for 900g, turkey breast fillets £2.99 for 700g, treacle tart 99p for 320g. Marks & Spencer: chicken breast fillets in breadcrumb £4.99 for 750g, oak smoked salmon £2.49 for 100g, frozen at sea cod in crumb £2.99 for 600g, apple tart £1.69 for 510g. Morrison's: fresh braising steak £4.38 a kg, fresh shoulder of lamb £2.97 a kg, crumpets 39p for 12, Golden Delicious apples 29p a lb.

Sainsbury's: large frozen chicken £1.85 each, minced beef and onion pies 79p for 400g, fish fingers £1.89 for 1.5kg, home grown potatoes 69p for 2.5kg, Conference pears 99p for 1.25 kg, Royal Gala apples £1.19 for 12, diet yoghurts £1.99 for 12. Somerfield: British pork belly rashers £2.17 a kg, Class A chickens £1.74 a kg, gammon steaks £1.09 for two, minced beef and onion pie 39p.

Tesco: beef brisket slow roast £4.18 a kg, rump steak £7.38 a kg, boneless shoulder of pork £2.39 a kg, fresh whole roast chicken £3 a kg, Conference pears 39p a lb, baby sweetcorn £1.29 for 200g, crumpets 39p for ten. Waitrose: Scottish roasting beef £2.49 lb, Aberdeen Angus roasting beef £2.99 a lb, farmhouse sausage £1.39 for 450g, frozen North Atlantic prawns £3.89 for 400g, chilled raspberry trifle £1.25 for 397g, dairy vanilla ice-cream £2.19 for 2 litres.

Competition winner with love of food

ANNE POOLE, a lecturer, has won a competition in *The Times* for a £75 Marks & Spencer food voucher every week for a year.

Ms Poole, 38, a mother of three from Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, who lectures in history and politics at Kingston University and Kingston University, said: "Brilliant! That's quite something to win. I never win anything normally."

She adores the Marks & Spencer chicken Kiev, which became a bestseller in the Seventies when its food department took off. Fine wines and smoked salmon will also feature on her grocery list.

Entrants were asked to name the goddess of food: the answer was Ceres.

ROBIN YOUNG

Dealers alerted to Nelson theft

By A STAFF REPORTER

POLICE hope to trace the stolen diaries of Nelson's master gunner by circulating details to antique dealers all over Britain. The three volumes, written nearly 200 years ago, are believed to be worth tens of thousands of pounds.

They were taken a week ago in a raid on a Tyneside house but detectives believe that the burglars do not realise the true worth of the documents and may throw them away. Officers from Northumbria Police are circulating information to antique and art dealers across the country.

A national network of antiquarian booksellers has alerted its members to the theft. The handwritten notes, which

contain details of Nelson's battle plans and documentation on his fleet's weapons, were stolen from Gordon Scullard, 61, of Whickham, Gateshead, a descendant of a South Shields mariner who served with Nelson.

The thieves took antique furniture including a locked bureau in which the diaries were kept, Mr Scullard said: "They are unique. No one knew we had them here." John Graves, of the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, said they were irreplaceable and Nelson memorabilia was likely to attract great interest from dealers before the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar in 2005.

tea offers £2m
ama drug rebel

South Africa row over 'bugging' of police chiefs

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

A ROW broke in South Africa yesterday over the bugging of senior police officers that has drawn in the National Intelligence Agency and Thabo Mbeki, the First Deputy President.

The police service and I remain mystified as to who is behind this surveillance and why it was or is being done," said George Fivas, the national police commissioner, in a statement. "Other provincial commissioners have also reported various forms of surveillance," he added.

"All our efforts are supposed to be concentrated on fighting threats to South Africa's security — not each other."

The commissioner went on: "Former hit-squad commander Dirk Coetzee stated to a police officer ... that he was tasked by the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to spy on me and other members of the police top structure." This was denied by the agency, which

said Mr Coetzee, an apartheid-era security policeman who defected to the African National Congress, "has never received instructions by the NIA to this effect."

"We therefore reject any insinuations to this effect as nothing more than mischief-making." It claimed Mr Coetzee fled the country before South Africa's elections in 1994, won by the ANC, and gave details of murders and other covert activities he said had been carried out by himself and colleagues. Mr Mbeki said the reports of spying were "disturbing", and he had convened a meeting of relevant Cabinet ministers and heads of security agencies next week to discuss the issue.

The ANC said the reports, first published yesterday morning by *The Star* newspaper in Johannesburg, appeared to be aimed at sowing divisions between security agencies. "The NIA and the

police remain committed to the same objective, the defence of our democracy ... the allegations can only be interpreted as an attempt to create a rift of mistrust between these two important services and thereby bring the integrity of both into question," the ANC said.

Both the ANC and the opposition National Party of F.W. de Klerk, the Second Deputy President, called for an inquiry into the reports.

Later this month the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up by the Government of national unity and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is to begin hearings into human rights crimes carried out during the apartheid era. It is suspected that the surveillance of senior officers in the police force, which has been totally restructured, could be linked to parties involved in such activities trying to cover their tracks.



Tagged by Darwin: a finch found in a wooden crate at a Melbourne museum

Darwin's bird in the hand

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

A CHANCE find in the vaults of the Museum of Victoria in Melbourne was hailed yesterday as a priceless discovery and a coup for Australian science.

Two preserved birds — a finch and a tapaculo, or hush bird — were uncovered in a wooden crate. Both were almost certainly tagged and preserved by Charles Darwin on his voyage around South America in the 1830s during his quest to prove the theory of evolution.

The two specimens even carried a label in Darwin's handwriting stating: "C. Darwin Esq. 4 Jan 1837."

The museum's curator of ornithology, Dr Les Christidis, said: "It's quite a coup for Australia." The pair of birds were "priceless", he added.

"Any material by Charles Darwin is pretty special, but to actually find them in an Australian museum is totally unexpected," Dr Christidis said. "You just couldn't put a value on it."

Questions for Briton over arms

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

A BRITISH pilot and five other crew members of a cargo plane that allegedly dropped weapons by parachute over a rural area of eastern India are being questioned by Indian intelligence agencies in prison in Calcutta.

The men have been remanded in custody until Monday. British intelligence officials have been asked for information about the background of the pilot, Peter Bleach, who lives in a farmhouse in North Yorkshire.

He was arrested with the Latvian crew members of an AN26 aircraft that allegedly dropped rocket-propelled grenade launchers and at least 300 Kalashnikov rifles last month on to the village of Purulia in West Bengal.

K. Padmanabhaiah, the Indian Home Secretary, has reviewed investigations into the case, which government officials describe as an "international conspiracy". The authorities are searching for an Indian known as Randy who was supposedly the contact man in India for the arms deliveries.

NEWS BRIEFS

Charity's assets 'held' by Rwanda

Nairobi: Rwanda denied yesterday that its troops stole vehicles and equipment from Médecins sans Frontières, the French-based medical charity. A government spokesman said it was "temporarily holding" property of non-governmental organisations expelled last month to stop aid agency staff stealing it.

But the charity accused the Rwandan Army of stealing the equipment, worth more than £323,000. It was one of 38 foreign agencies, helping Rwanda to rebuild, ordered out last month. (Reuters)

Somali battle

Mogadishu: At least 12 people were killed and dozens wounded when Somali clan fighters attacked forces loyal to General Muhammad Farah Aidid, the warlord, in the town of Baidoa. (Reuters)

Ransom call

San Jose: The Costa Rican Government fears for the safety of two women, a German tourist and a Swiss resident, abducted from a resort. The kidnappers have demanded a £645,000 ransom. (AFP)

Alcohol find

New York: Tests on alcohol found in the captain's body recovered three days after last month's jet crash in Colombia should determine if it was consumed or resulted from a chemical reaction. (Reuters)

Chechen blast

Moscow: Separatists in Chechnya blew up a Russian armoured carrier near a military checkpoint, killing a Russian soldier. A shootout followed the blast near Grozny, the capital. Tass said. (Reuters)

Vintage brain

Frankfurt: Josef Jacobs, a wine expert, declared himself the world's oldest student after completing a university doctorate just before his 100th birthday. His thesis is on the Rhine in literature. (AFP)

US warned by Peking on visa for Taiwanese

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

CHINA last night cautioned America against issuing a visa to Li Yuan-zu, the Taiwanese Vice-President, or to interfere in its interpretation of human rights.

In an apparent effort to forestall another Sino-American clash over Taiwan, Peking pointedly reminded the US that it should act in accordance with the three joint communiqués both countries have signed. These state that there is only one China, the People's Republic of China.

The reminder came in the wake of Taiwan's application to Washington for a transit visa for its Vice-President to stop briefly on his way to attend the inauguration of the President of Guatemala. The unofficial visit of Lee Teng-hui, the Taiwanese President, to his alma mater, Cornell University, last June caused a sharp downturn in Peking's relations with Washington that have only recently begun to recover.

In Washington, the State Department confirmed that it was considering Taiwan's latest request for a visa.

Chen Jian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said yesterday when asked about the request that China opposed the island's attempt for independence. Commenting on Senegal's decision to establish relations with Taiwan, Mr Chen said China had severed relations with the West African state because it had betrayed its agreement to recognise Peking as the sole legitimate representative of China when the two sides established ties in 1971.

Taiwan said it had resumed ties with Senegal, bringing to 31 the number of countries recognising the island instead of mainland China.

□ Riffkind trip: China voiced hopes that the visit next week of Malcolm Riffkind, the Foreign Secretary, would add impetus to the recent improvement in ties, especially over Hong Kong. (AFP)

Bernard Levin, page 14

America offers \$2m for Burma drug rebel

FROM REUTER IN BANGKOK

THE United States has offered a \$2 million (£1.3 million) reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Khun Sa, the Burmese opium warlord, who is widely believed to have reached a peace deal with the Government in Rangoon.

The rebel leader has been indicted in the United States on drug trafficking charges.

An American embassy official said yesterday: "In an effort to bring Khun Sa to justice, the United States Government has authorised a reward of up to \$2 million for information leading to his arrest and conviction."

Former guerrilla colleagues say that Khun Sa is now in his jungle headquarters under the protection of Burmese troops, who arrived without resistance on Monday.

The official said: "We consider it the duty of the Bur-

mese authorities to bring Khun Sa to justice and the Burmese Government has consistently stated that they consider Khun Sa a criminal."

Former guerrilla colleagues speculate that Khun Sa has agreed to give up his war and strongholds in exchange for some sort of amnesty for his troops, and possibly for himself. But a Burmese government official said yesterday there was no question of Khun Sa avoiding the law.

Khun Sa denies being a heroin producer or trafficker and says he merely taxed opium traders travelling through his zone of control in the northeast Burmese state of Shan.

Singapore: Ten members of an international drugs trafficking syndicate have been arrested here, a Central Narcotics Bureau spokesman said yesterday. (Reuters)

COMPLAIN TO US ABOUT YOUR CAR
AND SEE WHAT YOU GET...



Political outrage as Tories defend 'balancing act' between free speech and trade

Saudi dissident to fight deportation in High Court

By Emma Wilkins

A SAUDI dissident who faces deportation to the Caribbean island of Dominica said yesterday that he would take his fight to remain in Britain to the High Court.

Dr Muhammad al-Masari condemned the Home Office's decision to refuse his claim for asylum in Britain. "It's a shrewd trick but not very dignified. It's a ploy that a country which has traditions of democracy going back to Magna Carta is slowly giving away all those standards of dignity and character," Dr Masari said at a Commons news conference.

"Of course, this is an attempt to silence me but I intend to stay here and fight in a dignified way. We will continue to fight for our country from here, God forbid from Dominica, or from the Moon if necessary," he added.

The deportation order came after pressure on the British Government from the Saudi regime, the US Administration and British arms companies. Saudi Arabia bought £1.5 billion of British goods in 1994 and the Al-Yamamah arms contract, signed in 1985, secures thousands of long-term British jobs.

Dr Masari described his reaction when a letter came from the Home Office giving him ten days to appeal or leave the country. "When I

received the paper it was shocking, because I would have expected some substantive explanation of the issues involved. I would have thought it would have taken several years to sort all this out," he said.

Dr Masari applied for political asylum in Britain in April 1994, after escaping from Saudi Arabia via Yemen. A government attempt to deport him to Yemen was blocked by the Immigration Appeals Tribunal on the ground that his life would be in danger.

Dr Masari left his job as a professor of physics at King Fahd University, Riyadh, in 1993 to set up the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia. The organisation, which attacked corruption within the regime, was outlawed and Dr Masari was arrested, imprisoned and allegedly tortured for six months.

"My home was raided and they took me away to prison. They beat me with bamboo sticks and spat in my face. I did not fear for my life while I was in jail, but I am sure now that if I went back I would be executed," he said. Dr Masari, 49, said he believed Dominica was a pleasant country, but he had no desire to live there.

He criticised Ann Widdecombe, a Home Office Minister, for suggesting that if he

did not like Dominica he could go to a "fundamentalist" Muslim country. Mrs Widdecombe defended the Home Office decision and said she had a balancing act to maintain between Dr Masari's freedom of speech and thousands of British jobs.

Lord Avebury, the Liberal Democrat peer and chairman of the parliamentary human rights group, said the attempt to deport Dr Masari was unlawful. "It's quite clear that this decision was taken on purely commercial grounds. If the UK is willing to give in to blackmail from a powerful state like Saudi Arabia, then what is to prevent other countries attempting similar things?"

Tony Banks, Labour MP for Newham North West, said: "This is us being completely pressurised by the Saudis... Damn his civil rights — business is more important, particularly business with a very nasty and unpleasant regime."

Ken Livingstone, the Labour MP whose Brent East constituency includes Dr Masari's Willesden home, said: "What you have is the British Government being prepared to sacrifice someone's interests in order to suck up to the Saudis." Dr Kalim Siddiqui, leader of the self-styled Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, said the move was an attempt to appease Saudi Arabia. He promised to continue Dr Masari's work if the appeal failed.

Sir Ivan Lawrence, Tory chairman of the Commons Home Affairs Committee, said: "We have to strike a balance. Most people would say that if foreigners want to come to this country they are very welcome, but they can't use this country as a base for causing a great deal of ill-feeling to friends. We cannot allow our friends to be insulted by somebody who has come here simply to make mischief."



Muhammad al-Masari, the campaigner against the Saudi Royal Family who is to be expelled from Britain under the new hardline policy of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, leaves his north London headquarters yesterday for a Commons press conference

Britain shuts door on fundamentalists

MICHAEL HOWARD'S order for the expulsion of Muhammad al-Masari, the Saudi Islamic dissident, marks a watershed in British policy. It also sends a signal to a large number of Muslim exiles in London: the Government will not allow Britain to become a haven for Islamic fundamentalists.

The Home Secretary made the move because the dissidents' activities were in danger of jeopardising thousands of British jobs. On a visit to Saudi Arabia in November, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, was berated over Dr Masari's activities in London, and British businessmen expressed fears that export orders were being lost as a result.

For the past two years, the Government has been increasingly vexed by the influx of dissidents from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Most are virulent opponents of their governments, and have either escaped from prison, are under sentence or face arrest if they return. Once in Britain, many have applied for asylum, and while awaiting a decision have used the network



Michael Binyon, Diplomatic Editor, assesses the Home Secretary's action in enforcing a "not welcome" rule against leading Islamic militants who are campaigning from their exile in London

of Arab newspapers, radio stations and political contacts to campaign against their governments.

The dissidents' calls for an Islamic state envisage a return to a puritanical enforcement of Sharia (Islamic law) with its provision for draconian punishments for theft and adultery, the scrapping of pluralist democracy and enforced seclusion of women.

Middle East governments have been outraged. Most consider themselves friendly to Britain and generally pro-Western. They are engaged, to varying degrees, in a political struggle with Islamic activists, who oppose Western influence and political links with America and Europe. They cannot therefore understand why Britain's Conservative Government not only tolerates the radicals' presence

in London, but also maintains that it has no power to curb their political activities here as long as they do not break British law.

Relations with Tunisia have been bedevilled by Britain's granting of asylum to Rashid Ghannouchi, an Islamic activist who heads the banned al-Nahda Islamic party and was convicted by a Tunisian court of responsibility for a bomb blast that blew the foot off a British tourist.

Bahrain was furious that three pro-Iranian Muslim clergy who were expelled after widespread rioting and demonstrations arrived in Britain, having unexpectedly switched their tickets. Within a week Bahrain's Foreign Minister flew to London to persuade the Government not to grant them asylum. Egypt has also

denounced the presence in London of Islamic activists, in particular two prominent opponents of President Mubarak. He gave a warning in November that Britain would pay "a very high price" for granting asylum to Muslim militants.

For Britain, however, the two real challenges have come from Algeria and Saudi Arabia. France has publicly called on Britain to do more to suppress the activities of Algerian militants. Saudi Arabia has recently stepped up pressure on London over dissidents in Britain, shaken by the bomb attack on the headquarters of the National Guard, which killed six people including four Americans.

The barrage of criticism from Arab governments led John Major last year to promise that Britain would take vigorous new unspecified measures against militants. Last night, Arab ambassadors welcomed the move against Dr Masari as the first step in making London a more hostile environment for Islamic activists.

Leading article, page 15

Middle Eastern activists 'funded by exile tycoon'

By Ben Macintyre and Stewart Tendler

A SAUDI ARABIAN millionaire is suspected of channeling thousands of pounds to Islamic militants in London which may have bankrolled French terrorist bombings, according to security sources in Paris and London yesterday.

Scotland Yard anti-terrorist sources said the cash was ostensibly intended for the publication of a fundamentalist newspaper but some of the money is thought to have been passed to the Algerian groups waging a terror campaign across France.

Police suspect the fundamentalists' benefactor is Oussama ibn-Laden, the son of one of the richest families in Saudi Arabia. He has been linked to the French attacks after the arrest of an Algerian now awaiting extradition from Britain to France.

The elusive Saudi tycoon, who lives in Sudan, has provided backing for various fundamentalist groups for more than a decade. He is thought to have acted on behalf of Iraqis, Libyans and other Saudi dissidents. Mr ibn-Laden, 40, sent cash to Rachid Ramda, organiser of al-Ansar, a newsletter of the radical Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) published in London. The newspaper is distributed at mosques in Britain and has been reported to the Crown Prosecution Service for racial incitement.

The GIA has claimed responsibility for the recent

bombings in France. The funds began to appear in London about two years ago and increased until they reached \$500 (£320) a month at one point last year.

Mr ibn-Laden has been a target of interest for several Western intelligence agencies since they first confirmed that he had established a base in Khartoum. Sudan's Islamic Government has turned a deaf ear to Western requests for the extradition of wanted men living in the country. French intelligence agents travelled to Khartoum to kidnap the leading terrorist, Carlos the Jackal, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, in August 1994.

Mr Ramda, 26, was arrested in London on November



Carlos: kidnapped by the French in Sudan

ber 4 at the request of Paris and awaits extradition to France. He was remanded in custody at Belmarsh Magistrates' Court, south London, yesterday until March 1.

Described by the French press as the "mastermind" of the attacks, Mr Ramda is alleged to have passed on funds to Islamic terrorist units in France, enabling them to rent flats and purchase bomb materials.

Mr ibn-Laden, 40, who was deprived of his Saudi citizenship in 1993, has been linked with numerous radical Islamic groups in the past. His family's fortune was amassed by building mosques. In the early 1980s, Mr ibn-Laden provided support for Mujahidin guerrillas fighting Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

According to French newspaper reports yesterday, Algerian volunteers keen to join the Afghan guerrillas had their passage paid by the man known as the "jihad's banker". Mr ibn-Laden was in the Afghan refugee camps at Peshawar, on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, in the early 1980s where he allegedly made contact with the Iran-backed Hezbollah extremist group.

After the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, many of the Algerian volunteers collectively known as "The Afghans" returned to Algeria where they formed a militant

Israelis to free Hamas militants

FROM REUTERS IN GAZA

ISRAEL agreed yesterday to free jailed members of Hamas, the Islamic militant group which opposes Israeli-PLO peace moves, before the Palestinian elections on January 20, a Palestinian negotiator said.

Nabil Shaath, a former member of the self-rule Palestinian Authority who is negotiating the release of prisoners, said after meeting David Libai, the Israeli Justice Minister, on the Israeli-Gaza border, that Israel would free more than 1,200 inmates soon. Those released would include Hamas members.

Israel freed some Hamas prisoners after it signed its first peace deal with the PLO in 1993, but has excluded members of the group from subsequent releases since Hamas and Islamic Jihad killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings.

Meanwhile, Bassam Eid, a Palestinian member of the B'tselem Israeli human rights group who was jailed for 24 hours by PLO police, said yesterday that Yasser Arafat's autonomy government was no better than the Israeli regime it replaced. He vowed to continue his activities.

Washington: The United States is investigating whether Israel sold China American technology to build an advanced fighter without Washington's permission, the State Department said. (Reuters)

'Newtron bomb' fall-out changes slang

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

IF AN American goes berserk at work it is known as going *postal*, a term coined from the number of shootings by frustrated workers at US post offices. But keep your anger under control and you could have a high EQ or emotional intelligence.

Stay glued to a computer and you risk becoming a *mouse potato*. Get divorced young and you will have survived a *starter marriage*.

Original words and phrases are spewing forth, according to the American Dialect Society, which has just conducted its annual roundup. The most mega-

bytes of new words come from computers, but medical breakthroughs, politics, changing lifestyles and humour all contribute buzzwords to live by.

Armed with their lists, the society's members — some 60 professors of English, philologists and linguists — met in Chicago to pick their Words of the Year that most aptly characterised current discourse and preoccupations.

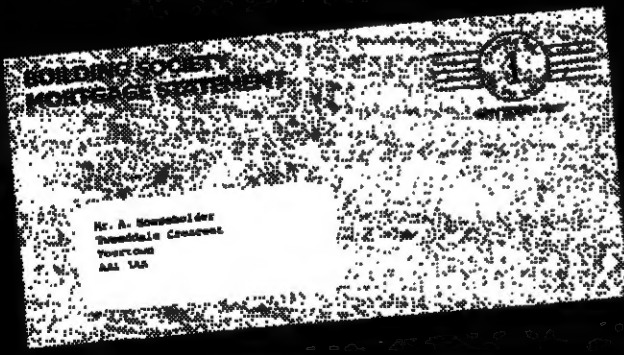
This year's first place, announced yesterday, was a tie between *World Wide Web*, the multimedia network, and *Newt*, as in Newt Gingrich. The House Speaker's first name has appeared in phrases poking fun at him. They include: *Newtspeak*, *Newt World Order*, *Newtron bomb*, *Newtie Boy* and *Newt kids* on the

block, describing his devoted followers. EQ was chosen as most useful new phrase. *starter marriage* as most outrageous and *going postal* as most original.

That left a lot of runners-up. Among them: *smoking bed* for sexual misconduct that destroys a political career, *nastygram* for unwelcome messages on the Internet, and *zone out* for mindless relaxation. Officials who stick close to President Clinton, especially during photo sessions, are *Velcrooids*. *Gaydar* is the ability of homosexuals to spot others.

Every year there are probably 10,000 freshly minted words or phrases worth noting, according to David Barnhart, publisher of *The Barnhart Dictionary Companion*, a quarterly of new usages.

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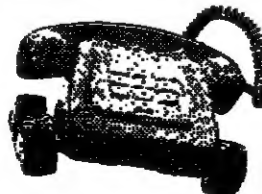
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Arson blamed for restaurant death of top French chef

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE mysterious death last week of Jean Schillinger, one of France's top chefs, renowned for inventing some of the most aromatic sauces in French cuisine, is believed to have involved crime.

Schillinger, 61, president of the Association of French Master Chefs, died when his famous restaurant in Alsace, awarded two Michelin stars, was destroyed by fire two days after Christmas.

The police initially assumed that the fire was an accident, but after combing through the burnt-out rubble of the Jean Schillinger Restaurant in Colmar they began to suspect that the death of the *patron* was far from accidental. On Wednesday, the Colmar magistrate classed the case as "arson leading to death".

The chef died of asphyxiation in his flat over the restaurant. He had spent Christmas at another home, but he always stayed in the flat

above his restaurant, alone, on the eve of reopening after a holiday to get an early start in his kitchen. At 5am on the day of the fire, Schillinger was woken by security guards who had been alerted by a burglar alarm in the restaurant. Witnesses said Schillinger twice appeared on the balcony of his flat as the fire spread, then vanished inside.

Neighbours reported hearing the sound of breaking glass just before the fire started and investigators discovered a large stone amid the rubble which police believe was used to break a downstairs window. Jean-Pierre Laffitte, the magistrate in charge of the case, said other "strong and convergent" clues have been discovered. "Foul play is strongly suspected but cannot be established for certain. The sounding of the alarm does not prove the presence of a person in the restaurant; it could have been

set off by the flames or something else," M Laffitte said.

Many stars of French gastronomy attended Schillinger's funeral in Strasbourg Cathedral. Paul Bocuse, the master chef, described him as one of the grand masters.

The police in Colmar said that Schillinger had been the object of bitterness, but M Laffitte refused to say whether he had received any death threats. French cuisine is a competitive business, but Schillinger, a welcoming host famed for his smoked duck liver ravioli and foie gras with truffles, had few known enemies. His colleagues have expressed bafflement that anyone would destroy his restaurant, let alone kill its owner.

Mafia gangs have established protection rackets in other parts of the French restaurant business but Colmar remains a quiet city with little crime.



Jean Schillinger, who was killed by a blaze in his Colmar restaurant, was widely acclaimed for his aromatic sauces

Fit to burst on trail of a four-star hoax to deflate Michelin

FROM KATE MUIR IN PARIS

IT was an unimpressive four-line entry in the 1996 *Michelin Guide*, but it would change the course of culinary history: "**** Vivarois, 192 Avenue Victor Hugo. Closed August Saturdays and Sundays. Lunch 345 francs. à la carte 400-700 francs. Specialties: fondant of vegetables with olive purée, stuffed and braised squash, turbot with celeriac."

The four tiny stars which accompanied the entry — published in a sneak preview in a French magazine — set the teeth gnashing of Paris's jealous chefs. Vivarois is the first restaurant, not only in Paris, but the universe, to be awarded four Michelin stars. Five restaurants in Paris have three "worth a special journey" stars.

Suddenly, the once "unpretentious" Vivarois, whose previous ratings varied between two and three stars, was thrust into the international limelight.

As an investigative journalist, it seemed sensible to make an immediate reservation for lunch. The chef, Claude Peyrol, they said, would not be able to talk: "He is an artisan. He stays in the kitchen."

Clutching my computer printout on the Great Peyrol, I dived in a taxi and arrived in the restaurant — kitted out with white plastic bucket chairs — that had not changed much since M

Peyrol and his wife Jacqueline opened in 1966. I took hold of a menu, but just as I pondered the "leek mousse with fresh tomato coulis", the waiter snatched it away and announced that the chef would be providing a special tasting.

It began with a minuscule croissant filled with anchovy purée, moved onto a perfect cluster of vegetables in coriander vinaigrette, paused for a delicate slice of roasted red pepper mousse, topped with two raviolis filled with fresh lobster, continued with a truffle cushioned in flaky pastry, and triumphed with a slice of fish in cream sauce, which although delicious, was too much. I refused the cheese board.

As I paused for stomach space, the head waiter approached. "It's not true, you know, it's a hoax." Feeling like a deflated soufflé, I trapped the chef. The hoax was confirmed. Back at the office, I phoned Michelin: "We never ever award anyone four stars, and never will," said a spokesman.

The man who started the story was Périco Légasse, food critic of *L'Événement du Jeudi*. "You went there?" he hooted. "It was a joke to give the *Michelin Guide* a good shaking up, since it's got so stuffy. Nice lunch, though."



Oleksy: was very close to former Soviet agent

Polish PM 'was naive' about spy

FROM REUTERS IN WARSAW

JOZEF OLEKSY, the Polish Prime Minister, fighting off allegations that he spied for Moscow, has acknowledged that he made a mistake in keeping close personal contacts with a Russian agent.

But he reiterated that the contacts did not involve spying and that he was innocent. He had earlier accused Poland's secret services of fabricating evidence that he was a former Soviet mole.

"Too intimate a friendship with such an acquaintance is imprudent. I know this today," Mr Oleksy said in a television interview on Wednesday night. "But you cannot put an equals sign between this acquaintance and today's interpretations [by the secret services]."

Mr Oleksy indirectly admitted that his friendship with Vladimir Alganov, a Moscow diplomat and an intelligence officer in Warsaw in 1981-92, was very close. In Moscow, Mr Alganov said on Tuesday the Polish Prime Minister had been "of no interest to the Soviet Union".

Mr Oleksy, a former senior communist official, has accused former President Walesa of using the case for political revenge. Mr Walesa was defeated in the November presidential elections by another former communist, Aleksander Kwasniewski.

Nato and US win Bosnians' release

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN SARAJEVO

SIXTEEN Bosnian civilians held captive by Bosnian Serb forces were freed yesterday after Nato and the United States put pressure on the Serbs.

The first three to be released yesterday morning said they were beaten with pistols and held in a small bathroom for several days. Thirteen others were later handed over to French Nato troops from the Kula prison near Lukavica.

Their release comes as President Clinton plans to visit US troops in Bosnia in the next two weeks. Washington had protested to President Milosevic of Serbia over the abduction eight days ago of the 16 in Ilidza, west of Sarajevo.

Their arrests were an overt violation of the American-

Belgrade: A dog, Dena, walked 300 miles across Croatia for four months and found its owners, the Radanovic family, on New Year's Eve in Serbia. The family fled Petrinja, Croatia, in August. Dena found them in Ruma, near Belgrade. (AFP)

brokered Dayton peace accord and greatly embarrassed Nato, which initially said that it was not its mandate to protect Bosnian civilians encouraged to use roads opened across ethnic areas.

As Muslims refused to venture into Serb territory, the Bosnian Government accused Nato of shirking its responsibility towards civilians. The US State Department demanded the release of those detained and Nato officials conducted talks to secure their freedom.

Yesterday, in what could be the first deliberate attack on Nato troops, an Italian soldier was shot on duty in Vogosca, a Serb-held suburb of Sarajevo due to be returned to government control. Other Nato casualties so far have involved landmines.

Doubts grow in Paris over single currency

BY BEN MACINTYRE

TWO sacred cows of government thinking came under attack this week as prominent figures from both sides of the political spectrum voiced growing doubts about France's ability to meet Maastricht criteria for European currency union and the stability of the Franco-German axis.

The deficit-cutting drive for a single currency and the priority of the German alliance have become twin articles of faith for most of the French elite. By suggesting they may be in danger, commentators are beginning to say the unsayable.

Writing in *Le Nouvel Observateur* magazine this week, Jacques Delors, the former European Commission President, said: "Let us have the courage to recognise that the real danger today is not so much the risk of a Euro-British crisis as that of a Franco-German split."

By oscillating between a

British-style reflex in defence of sovereignty and German federalist ambitions, France "runs the risk of discouraging those German leaders who have... shown their allegiance to a European Germany rather than a German Europe," he added, insisting only a "European federation of nation states" can accommodate the ambitions of France and Germany.

At the same time, in an article in the *International Herald Tribune* yesterday, the Gaullist MP Pierre Lellouche wondered: "Can France... balance its finances, stimulate growth and employment, carry out structural reforms and cut by half the budget deficit, all in the span of three years?"

If currency union is scuppered, he said, "the balance of power between Germany and France would be profoundly transformed, with damaging consequences for the future of Europe."

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Maurice Saatchi finds his voice

For years, the mastermind behind some of the most successful advertising campaigns in history has been avoiding interviews. With some reluctance, he has lifted the veil on his enigmatic personality

IT IS exactly one year to the day since I did not interview Maurice Saatchi. He had just said goodbye to the company bearing his name: a shaken soul, but not shaken enough to dislodge his insistence on never being interviewed or quoted. A year on, we go through the same charade.

There must be no interview (the I-word). I must not meet him in time or place. I must not say (he dictates): "Maurice leaned back in his chair and gazed out of the window..." It is hard to tell whether he is being serious, sometimes, as he strikes these poses — an uneasy alliance of arrogance and diffidence. He claims that answering questions will make him break out in a terrible rash. He has evolved this neurosis about being quoted. How does he get away with it? How does he always get away with everything?

Let us look at the facts. A year ago, nobody could foresee what would become of him. David Herro, the Chicago fund-manager who instigated the boardroom coup against Maurice, might have been right. Clients and creative talents might have stayed with the old company. Maurice might have sat in his little office named "Dress Rehearsal" in Davies Street, looking dolefully out of the window through his enormous glasses.

As it turned out, this new year — his fiftieth — starts cheerily. His old friends have proved loyal. The new British Airways campaign was launched yesterday. He finds himself laughing more than for years. As he likes to say: "Saatchi is more than a company. It's an attitude." After the debacle, the Saatchi name ("a bloody good name, so bizarre nobody will forget it" — Charles Saatchi) is the only unfurnished business. A legal battle, when the old company tried to stop M and C from using their own name, was settled last summer.

The brothers agreed not to solicit old clients or staff for six months. Their old company became Cordiant plc, but retained the Saatchi & Saatchi name for subsidiaries. To have two competitors under the Saatchi name is absurd. Maurice has said: "I do take some pride — not boasting, I hope — in reflecting how few British brand names have become famous all over the world. Saatchi is a great brand name."

Saatchi & Saatchi is no longer emblazoned across Berkeley Square. M & C Saatchi inhabit three floors of a building off Wigmore Street, where the style of décor —

pink herringbone tweed wall-covering — is not quite the Saatchi taste. Already they have outgrown it.

The story of the brothers' 17 years of aggrandisement has been often told. By 1986 they handled 5 per cent of the world's advertising. Then they over-reached themselves: they swallowed Ted Bates, then attempted to take over the Midland Bank in a hubristic *jolie de grandeur*.

Now, while old Saatchi languishes, the new Saatchi agency has succeeded in regaining British Airways, Dixons, the Mirror Group, Gallaher, Qantas and Pfizer accounts, and taken on several more, including PPP, Sekonda, Alamo Rent-a-Car, Head, Glaxo Wellcome...

So Maurice and his wife, Josephine Hart, still have their three houses: Mayfair,

And he included a recording of Nathan Saatchi — who brought his family from Baghdad in 1947, when Maurice was one — singing in Hebrew at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in Maida Vale. This made the old man very happy. (All four sons have "lost their religion".)

Sue Lawley lobbed at Maurice the memorable first line of his wife's first novel: "Damaged people are dangerous. They know they can survive." Was this true of him, she asked? "Yes, I think it's a most brilliant observation."

Lawley's view was that he was now motivated by revenge, like Hamlet. Maurice pointed out that Hamlet's revenge involved losing his own life: "I would hate to think that Hamlet's story was analogous..."

But getting the British Airways account back was, indeed, sweet revenge. Four agencies pitched for the account: the others were old Saatchi & Saatchi (known at M & C Saatchi as "Oldco"), J. Walter Thompson, and Bartle Bogle Hegarty. M & C won it, a campaign worth £100 million over two years. Tim Duffy is the young creative genius behind the first ad. Duffy, ex-Cambridge, explained to me his concept: "British Airways ads have always emphasised scale and size, with crowd scenes and big statements such as 'every year we bring the equivalent of Manhattan across the Atlantic'... But an airline has to communicate its personal, people-related side: customer service and sensitivity. Every moment, 15,000 people are in the air flying British Airways. Each passenger has hopes, dreams, ambitions, and we explore that human angle."

[I try to forget the time in 1986 that we, with hopes, dreams and four small children, were bumped off a British Airways flight on a Bank Holiday for no better reason than that they had routinely overbooked the flight, when someone mentioned this to Lord King on our behalf his response was: "Tough." But that was reality, this is advertising. We shall see the new BA commercial this weekend, along with half a billion other people on six continents. It is certainly clever, a very 1990s commercial.

The mysterious alchemy of the advertising world is all to do with romance. This is why the old Saatchi & Saatchi loyalists, and the rising newcomers like Duffy, resigned on principle, and followed Maurice. Herro thought the "ami-

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Sussex, the South of France. Christmas passed quietly in Sussex.

People were astonished, last year, when Maurice exposed himself to the scrutiny of *Desert Island Discs*. He had never done a broadcast of any kind before. He agreed to it, at the third time of asking, because Josephine — Irish, voluble, warm, passionate — insisted, on the grounds that it was such an honour.

He now realises why the programme is so magnetic. He thought he could get away with picking records and talking about them, but discovered that he had to explain each choice with a confessional revelation. A certain jazz record had erotic power: his elder brothers would play it when entertaining girls in their rooms. The Bach Double Violin Concerto was his former father-in-law's favourite. *Surabaya Johnny*, the song of unrequited love by Kurt Weill, is what Josephine insists on playing after Sunday lunch.



An unlikely mixture of arrogance and diffidence — Maurice Saatchi claims that an interview can bring him out in a terrible rash

gos" who had been with the brothers since time began — Jeremy Sinclair (creative guru who devised the pregnant man, Bill Muirhead, and David Kershaw — would never walk away from their fat-cat accountments, pensions, chauffeured cars, and so on. But they did. Sinclair wrote in his resignation letter: "I am not leaving the company. The company has left me."

Maurice is suitably grateful to the amigos, the clients, the young Duffys. The atmosphere at M & C now is very like the old days, everyone talking in shorthand. He is no longer driven by a crazed ambition to be the biggest agency in the world. He will not make that mistake again. "All that we would like to achieve is to be the most sought-after agency in the world." They have offices in New York, Hong Kong, Sydney and Singapore, but the French international agency Publicis operates for them elsewhere.

As a possible election year looms, Maurice has resumed another former account: selling the Tories. At a recent reception at 11 Downing Street, I witnessed him making a bet with the brother-in-law of Alan Howard: that the Tories would win the next election with an increased majority.

Last weekend, Saatchi launched a message from the Prime Minister in a full-page ad in all the Sunday papers. It coincided, unfortunately, with Emma Nicholson's defection — a foretaste of the agony and panic the coming campaign will doubtless involve. But they do have a master strategy. "It is important not to peak too early," Maurice says, chuckling.

After three years with the Saatchis, writing his book *The Brothers*, Ivan Fallon found Maurice "more shadowy and more complex" than ever. His choice of desert island luxury was a virtual reality headset that would transport him to his Sussex garden. "I would step out onto my terrace, I

would look at the beautiful wall of my house, and marvel at the inspired plantmanship which involved juxtaposing Paul's Himalayan Musk with the fading flowers of the wisteria. I would get into my boat, sail cross my lake and arrive at my jetty. Josephine

would get into the boat and me. Perception is reality," he argues. Virtual reality manufacturers have since inundated him with offers to create his headset.

In last year's non-interview, I said Maurice's most annoying diversionary tactic when asked a question was his

counter-question: "Why don't you wear lipstick?" Afterwards he kindly sent me a very grand lipstick: Paloma Picasso's Mon Rouge. It makes me look like Cruella de Vil. One day I shall smear it on and terrify him into answering some straight questions.

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Don't show, girls why the blatant sexual content of *Showgirls* may prove to be the year's biggest turn-off
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Whose scalp will Scott take?

Peter Riddell says soundbites are as important as the inquiry

The Scott report on the arms to Iraq affair is the political wild card of the new year. Eighteen months late, the report is finally due to be submitted to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, within a few weeks. Its impact will depend not just on what it says — in more than 2,000 pages of complicated argument — or upon how vigorous a defence is mounted by the ministers criticised, but upon the snap judgment on what it appears to say.

Allegations about Whitehall misdemeanours seldom interest the public for long. They have little effect on most people's lives, and matter only when they cast doubt on the integrity of ministers or result in resignations. The Westland affair, exactly ten years ago, had a very limited impact on Tory fortunes. Margaret Thatcher worried that she might not survive, but once it was clear that she was safe, the murky details were quickly forgotten.

Much depends on the political mood. The inquiry under Lord Franks into the Argentine invasion of the Falklands in 1982 would have been much more damaging if the outcome had been anything other than a triumph for Margaret Thatcher, but when the report appeared eight months after the conflict, there was no desire for hand-wringing.

The Franks inquiry was a classic example of the importance of what a report appears to say. Much of it was critical of political and intelligence failures which preceded the invasion. Lord Callaghan of Cardiff described this as a "splendid picture, delineating the light and shade". But when Franks reached the final paragraph, 339, "he got fed up with the canvas that he was painting and chucked a bucket of whitewash over it". The key sentence — "we would not be justified in attaching any criticism or blame to the present Government" — reads oddly after the previous 338 paragraphs. But it set the tone for the press interpretation.

As Alex Danchev argues in his biography of Franks, "Franks clears Maggie's" was the reflex reaction, conditioned by the artful news management of the report's release: a tightly restricted distribution of advance copies, a prepared list of the number of key paragraphs, a spate of pre-publication leaks... designed to discount criticism of the Prime Minister herself and implant the idea of a long period of cross-party war guilt.

In the case of Scott, the inquiry's methods have already been fiercely criticised. The political world is divided between those who regard Sir Richard Scott as a brave, crusading judge who has exposed wrongdoing and covered up at the heart of Government, and those who see his inquiry as unfair to civil servants, and naïve about the workings of Whitehall and foreign policy. John Major has said merely that the Government will consider the report's conclusions, carefully making no commitment about accepting them.

The political world is fiercely divided about Scott

gued that they had a duty to sign to protect official documents, allowing judges to decide about release. But Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign shows that this is a cloudy area, and the report is expected to recommend changes.

Critics argue that certificates are gagging orders on the rights of defendants. This view was reinforced by the Court of Appeal's decision in November to overturn the convictions of four men involved in supplying arms to Iraq, the Ordtech case, on the ground that they had been denied a fair trial because vital documents were withheld by the Government.

Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General, advised the ministers to sign and it is likely that he, rather than they, will be the target of criticism. This raises the emotive issue of whether people might have been sent to prison after an unfair trial. Sir Nicholas argues that he acted in good faith on the basis of the best legal opinion at the time. But in the past someone has had to resign, just to clear the air. Lord Carrington and two other ministers quit over the Falklands, and Mr Heseltine and Sir Leon Brittan did over Westland. Sir Nicholas and Mr Waldegrave intend to defend their decisions vigorously. But the former looks more vulnerable as the necessary sacrifice this time. Sir Nicholas's enforced departure would further weaken the Government, but should not of itself be terminal. The last rites could still be some time away.



MISS WIDDECOMBE'S CONVERSION

Great wail of China

When dissidents are being jailed and infants are being slaughtered in squalor, tourists should stay at home

A tiny paragraph — hardly more than a dozen lines — stops the marmalade spoon halfway to the toast. I think I would have missed it altogether, had it not been on the same page as, and near the news of, the latest atrocity to be inflicted upon Wei Jingsheng, and I might as well give it to you in full. Headlined "China predicts rosy tourist future", it went, full of sics, like this:

China expects to draw 250 million tourists from abroad over the next five years: about a 25 per cent increase from the first half of the 1990s, the official China Daily newspaper reported on Monday.

Revenue from tourism is also expected to grow, reaching \$14 billion by the year 2000. The newspaper was quoting He Guangwei, the director of the China National Tourism Administration.

Some 45 million overseas tourists will have visited China by the end of 1995, the report said, and they will have spent \$5 billion.

Mr He said he expected that Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, and Macau's in 1999, to bring in more visitors through those ports.

The first and most obvious thought to arise is that there is no reason to believe anything whatever that He Guangwei says on the subject of tourism to China, or on anything else for that matter. If He Guangwei were told by his bosses to take all his clothes off and dance naked on the roof of the China National Tourism Administration, he would instantly do so. And if the gentleman over there has begun to curl his lip in scorn at my disbelief of the China National Tourism Administration's veracity, I shall ask him if he is old enough to have heard of a man called Stalin. (Just as I was about to pen my next line, I stopped in something like horror; I had realised that there are in our country very many thousands of people — millions, perhaps — who have not heard of Stalin.)

Some years ago, I wrote a column in just taunting the remnants of the dupes of the Soviet Union — no, they were much, much worse than dupes (this was when Gorbachev had just mounted the throne) — in which I made up a roster of those who had tried to wriggle out of their slavishness to evil. I made up ludicrous names for them, and I ended my decency to blush. But I found my nonsense — still in absurdist mode —

by saying that they shouldn't be unhappy just because Brezhnev was dead, because Mao Tse-tung was even dead, and he would surely look after his acolytes, dead or alive. (After all, if there was a hitch, the flowers could always mark time in Cuba, the very last outpost of Soviet democracy.)

Now go back and look at my paragraph, my serious paragraph, about occidentals in scores of millions flocking to China and her wonderfully democratic political system. And then spit, or I will.

Let me wander a little. Why did so many millions — yes, it is very many millions — give allegiance to manifest evil, though the evil was obvious and terrible? For a considerable time after Stalin and Stalinism had dissolved entirely, many of the shamed tried to wriggle out by saying that they hadn't seen, or understood, what was happening; that filmy, lying excuse disappeared and dissolved very early. Whereupon other millions coolly transferred their equal allegiance to an equal evil, now a Chinese one. When He Guangwei shuffles the pack, there will be very many other millions from many truly democratic lands scurrying to see China, or the bits the leaders will allow them to see.

Come, let us follow the group: we have seen the Great Wall, and by domestic converse we have seen at every open door a neat, plump, smiling housewife (or, of course, househusband). When we ask a different kind of question, such as "Do you really believe that people in genuine democratic countries are willing to believe that China's record on human rights is more or less the same as ours?", our guide smiles and says that there are some bad people in Britain and in other countries who tell nasty lies about his country: he smiles again, and all is happy and smiling.

Or almost. For the name of Wei

Jingsheng keeps popping up, particularly when I am around, because whenever I see a headline which reads something like "China defends its record on human rights", I know that the foulest kind of lies are stewing in the pot, and that there is nothing — nothing — that could be called respect for human rights.

You should be raging by now, but cool down for a moment, and think not about the hideous fate of Wei Jingsheng, but about the man himself. Consider: the moment he got out of a jail after being incarcerated for 15 years for disagreeing with the Government, he went back in again for exactly the same reason. Would you do that? And for nothing but the truth? And without remuneration for good conduct? And under judges who could only be called

whores, for the very good reason that they are whores?

Rude, am I? Try this. When Wei Jingsheng was sentenced to 14 years (this is his second such sentence, not the first), the thing on the bench — his name is Wang Ming — was obviously not only told what sentence he was to give out (that, of course, is the standard form of "justice" in China), but was even told that the trial was to be described as "an ordinary case". There were two other villains in the matter, and I might as well name them too: the other thing, Judge was Wang Yesheng, and the Prosecutor was Wang Huajun. Asked whether the trial had been fair, the rehearsed answer was, yes it had been fair, because Wei Jingsheng had attacked the Government.

Amid this, we are told that there is respect for human rights in China. To prove it (and this gets very macabre), the Chinese Government has published a weird kind of *apologia*. It is 23,000 words long and I am willing to bet a substantial sum that there is not a single word of truth anywhere in it.

Bernard Levin

No gripes

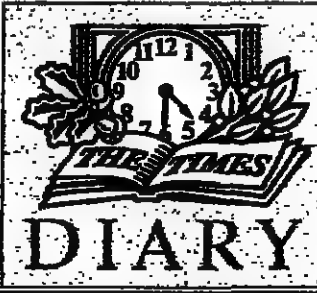
ENGLAND'S abject cricketing performance in South Africa yesterday was enough to bring on a bout of indignation in any of the team's supporters. But nobody reached for the gripe-water quicker than Jack Bannister, the British commentator who promised in a local newspaper that he would "eat this page" if South Africa won.

Bannister was held to his promise within minutes of the square-cut that earned South Africa its crushing Test victory. With local television cameras dancing gleeful attendance, Bannister was presented with the page on a silver platter, along with one bottle of South African chardonnay and a flask of digestive salts. He swallowed his pride along with the entire page.

The technique was to tear the newspaper into strips, then chew the page strip by strip, and swallow with a good gulp of wine. Aside from the odd burp, Bannister, who prides himself as a bookmaker, behaved with impressive decorum throughout the whole dyspeptic episode.



Prince Edward's girlfriend, Sophie Rhys-Jones, arrived on Wednesday for her first day's work



Sting is having to build a hot-house at his Elizabethan mansion in Wiltshire in order to provide for his newly acquired pet iguanas.

He is spending thousands of pounds kitting out an orangery for his new pair of Central American tree lizards, which grow to be 4 ft and have a rapacious appetite.

The scaly creatures are a present from staff, explains their supplier, Pete Sheppard of the Porton Aquatic and Garden Centre. "Sting's head gardener came along to rescue a couple of iguanas," he says. "The staff wanted to buy him something unusual as a Christmas present."

Radio royal
RADIO-HAMS in Harrow have got their anorak-strings in a twist. They are itching to get King

Husain of Jordan to attend their golden anniversary this year of the local radio society.

Husain, who attended Harrow School, has long surfed the airwaves, and first visited the society in 1979 after an introduction from a communications officer at the Ministry of Defence. He soon became an honorary member: his call sign is JY1, and he recently made "friendly" radio contact between Jordan and Israel.

Derek Morris, president of the Radio Society of Harrow, is impressed: "His Majesty operates when in London. He speaks to people all over the world."

Corset does
A SPRIGHTLY young bird pops up this week in *The Oldie* magazine. Lord Menzies's mother Marutha, who celebrates her 100th birthday this month, is profiled by her daughter-in-law.

Lady Menzies lays bare the secrets of Marutha's longevity in the article, and says that, as a youngster, she used to sleep in her corset the better to maintain her 22-inch waist.

The doughty girl has a touch of the Katharine Hepburns about her. L. Hepburn, 88, still goes swimming in the lake by her house, even if she has to break the



Birthday girl Marutha: are icy baths the secret?

ice, and Lady Menzies explains that Marutha has lived for so long as a result of "bathing in ice-cold water, into which she has tossed two dozen grapefruit skins or a half-dozen bottlefuls of a very smelly drink called Kwass".

High above the woods in Klosters where the Prince of Wales's bodyguard broke his thigh slis a cosy cabin, the Alte Schwenndi mountain restaurant, purveyor of fine fare and finer cocktails. But, in the words of tabloid vulgarians, it is most likely a "snow-go zone" for the Prince and his party. Pride of place above the door is given to an enormous blow-up of the famous seductive photograph by Patrick Demarchelier of a young blonde, the Princess of Wales, which once graced the cover of *Vogue*. Locals have it that the Alte Schwenndi is known as the Alte Di.

P.H.S.

Philip Howard



Fishing should be for farmers, not pirates

Cry haddock and let slip the dogfish of war! Any day now the latest fish war is going to break out in the enigmatically named Irish Box. "Armadas" of huge Spanish trawlers were arriving in the Atlantic west and south of Ireland yesterday. Ere the month is out, you do not need to be a mystic astrologer prophesying mumbo-jumbo in "ere" language to predict fishy uproar over quotas (impossible to police), nets (too long and too synthetically unbreakable), mackerels (too small), dumping of unusable factory or out-quota fish overboard and other unsporting practices which are not exclusively Spanish.

Robert Benchley is credited with being asked in an examination to discuss a previous fish war on the Great Banks from the point of view of (a) the United States and (b) Canada. And to have opened his essay: "I have no knowledge of either (a) or (b). Accordingly I propose to approach this question from the point of view of the cod." I hope he was awarded alpha plus.

For he had a point. From the earliest records, fish have had a fried deal from chippers and a raw deal from sushi-eaters. The marginal relationship between man and fish shoals in language and literature. Fish are the lottery for which man toils not; neither does he spin, especially not on lochs reserved for wet fly. Homer's conventional epithet for the sea was the "unharvested". Perhaps he meant that fishing was a matter of luck and cunning, not husbandry. When blind Homer sang, you could not harvest the sea, just cast your net, trident or hook on the waters and hope for luck. Fishing was the avocative activity of man as hunter-gatherer and pirate, not man as farmer toiling on the stubborn earth in the sweat of his plough. Fishing of all sorts is the most popular participatory sport for males in Britain, because it is extremely idle and has old hunter-gatherer roots.

The trouble is that modern fishing technology has taken the lucky dip out of fishing and turned it into factory-farming. Nets a mile long and industrial vacuum sea-cleaners sweep up every fish in their track. Even the tourist fishing boats from Girvan and the other little harbours use radar to find the shoals of mackerel, instead of following the gannets and local knowledge. This is genocide.

Perhaps the sea was unharvested to our fish-fathers because the shoals of silver tunnies seemed boundless, untamed and unharvestable, a gift from the gods. French driftnets preserved their oyster. English *laissez faire* turned the oyster from poor man's food into an impossible luxury. Sam Johnson fed his cat Hodge on oysters. And he went out to buy them himself, in order to spare his slave/servant, Francis Barber, the humiliation of shopping for such common near-fish.

It makes no difference in a fish whether it is caught by Catalan hooks or drift-net, or whether it ends up in a tin unsuitable for tuna or on a fishmonger's slab for foodies. But even tuna must worry about man — a porcupine half its size and a third of its weight, who can swim only very slowly and with inelegant splashing at the Olympics.

By fishy standards, man is not unintelligent. Widespread myths record dolphins having rescued men in the soup because of the sweetness of their singing. And modern dolphins have found that men can be trained, after a few months of captivity, to come to the edges of their pools and feed them heerings three times as day, to the applause of the dolphinarium sentimentalists.

When man fished by hook and by crook, the shoals could coexist with him. No longer. Even a MAFF bureaucrat should see that unless international organisations and national governments control the efficiency and rapacity of their fishermen, the oceans will empty, like the Mediterranean Sea. Too many boats chase too few fish with too much advantage.

Until now, the primitive law of the ocean has been eat or be eaten. Now, by enforced and unpopular quotas on the numbers of fishermen (rather than on unfathomable quotas on the numbers of fish too efficiently pulled out of their element), by fish sanctuaries and fish farms, by banning destructive modern fishing technologies, and by buying out the fishermen, fish's old enemy must restrain his greed. Or he will end up on a silent sea.



NUMBER WARS

Labour's challenge on Tory economic ground

Short of another Falklands war, or a fatal accident occasioned by a bus to Tony Blair, what could deliver the next election to the Conservatives? The economy, stupid. It is the party's one best hope. Northern Ireland is too remote an issue, Europe too divisive and devolution too complicated. As our economics editor, Anatole Kaletsky, wrote yesterday, this year is likely to see more pounds in people's pockets. To economic determinists like Michael Heseltine, that means more positive points in opinion polls.

Although dry economic statistics have indicated a recovery for some years, the upturn has taken an unconscionable time to be detected by the public. That is because higher taxes and low wage growth have prevented better economic conditions from feeding through into the critical "feel-good" factor: personal disposable income, or cash take-home pay. This measure saw its smallest increase in 1994 since the 1940s, and last year was not much better. But in 1996, it looks set to rise by 5 per cent or more.

Hence the timing of the new year newspaper advertisements from the Conservative and Labour parties. The Tories have been waiting for some time to start trumpeting their economic achievements; until now they feared that such boasts would be met with cynical laughter. But a combination of tax cuts, rising house prices and lower interest rates have given consumers the sense that their prosperity is taking a turn for the better. Reports from the high street seem to tell the same story.

Thus newspaper readers are being asked careful questions in full-page advertisements: which country has the lowest mortgage rates for 30 years, the lowest basic rate of tax for over 50 years, the lowest unemployment of any major European country, and so on? Not Germany, not France, but "our country". This message is likely to be much repeated in the run-up to the election, culminating in the old but perennially successful slogan, "Don't let Labour ruin it".

Yesterday Labour was swift in its attempt to ruin the message at birth. It reran a version of a newspaper advertisement earlier used in November, but suitably changed to challenge the Conservative version of a bright, confident economy. "Which country," it asked, "has slumped from 13th to 18th in the world prosperity league?" Our Country, of course. The headline was followed by further questions detailing Britain's poor performance relative to other countries. Yes, but Labour would do even worse, is the Tories' immediate response. Think of the social chapter and the minimum wage; they would make Britain still less competitive.

Both advertisements are judicious in the choice of facts that best suit their purpose. Labour is deliberately selective in its claims about unemployment and poverty. The Tories vaunt the lowest basic rate of tax for 50 years, but fail to draw attention to higher VAT and lower reliefs and allowances. Labour has good points to make on poor educational standards and broken tax promises. The Tories can justifiably be proud of low inflation and mortgage rates and high foreign investment.

But which party will benefit most from this battle of the statistics? The Conservatives are pleased to see Labour fighting them on their ground. In recent elections, Labour has tended to shy away from economic arguments, preferring to focus on its own issues of health and education. Mr Blair has been audacious in taking the fight to his opponents' territory: yesterday he cheekily told a Japanese audience that he wanted Labour to be seen as the party of business. He hopes, if not to win, at least to neutralise the Tories' advantage.

The Tory economic message is certainly the best hope that John Major possesses. But it will not be an easy winner. Voters will not quickly forget the tax rises of the past few years; and if they show signs of doing so, Labour will surely remind them.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Britain, the Saudis and Muhammad al-Masari

Yesterday was a bad day for London's most vociferous Saudi Arabian dissident. Dr Muhammad al-Masari, in the capital with his fax machine for nearly two years now, has been served with deportation orders. Get thee to Dominica, he has been told, for you are making life for us too, too difficult. You are upsetting our steadfast allies in Saudi Arabia — the House of Saud — by your criticism of royal corruption there. Your constant demand for an "Islamic government" in the desert kingdom, directed to anyone who will listen, sows only problems for us.

Yesterday was a bad day, also, for Ann Widdecombe, the Home Office minister charged with overseeing asylum matters. From her egregious words on the radio — explaining the Government's decision to punt Dr Masari in a Caribbean direction — three sentences stand out. "We have had a difficult balancing act"; "We have got enormous export considerations"; and "Britain's interests as a whole do require his removal". The bluntness was unimpeachable; the reasoning less so.

Of course Britain has a difficult balancing act; and since it is not a case of balancing like with like, but one of balancing "values" against "interests", the difficulties are only enhanced. Dr Masari is in this country because he would, almost certainly, meet an unpleasant fate in Saudi Arabia. The Government of King Fahd detested him; that of his successor-elect, Crown Prince Abdullah, detests him too. It is easy to see why, for Dr Masari writes things like this: "The House of Saud has stolen at least half the State's revenues. What does astonish us, however, is the addition to theft and embezzlement which continues unabated even at the very peak of an economic crisis." Saudi officials, unsurprisingly, have called for Dr Masari to be silenced. They have also rumbled ominously of a possible loss to Britain of

lucrative contracts with Saudi Arabia if such silence were not imposed swiftly.

As recently as November last year, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said that although the Government did not like the presence of people like Dr Masari, it could take no action against them unless they broke the law. "We take a very hard line," Mr Rifkind said, "but we act against terrorism, not opinions." Yet that important distinction — between the voicing of opinion and the incitement to violence — seems to have been glossed over in yesterday's decision to deport Dr Masari.

The decision has been influenced almost wholly by Britain's export considerations; and these are not inconceivable. In 1994, the Saudis bought £1.5 billion worth of British goods. Vickers is presently bidding against French and American competition for a £900 million order for more than 200 tanks. The 1985 al-Yamamah oil-for-arms deal, signed by Margaret Thatcher, could come to be worth £20 billion to Britain over 20 years. A very legitimate question is thus raised: what should Britain do if the presence of Dr Masari endangers the health of so important a golden goose?

There are three options: leave him alone; let him stay, but order him to be silent; or deport him. The first has obvious commercial risks. The second would be unlawful: no court would permit the deprivation of his freedom of speech. The Government's option is the third. But what are the costs? Dr Masari has broken no law; and in refusing to consider his return to Saudi Arabia, the Government acknowledges the danger there to his life. The Home Secretary probably has the power to deport Dr Masari, but his decision will come under serious scrutiny when the Saudi dissident appeals. His departure may serve our immediate commercial interest; but the moral cost is high.

THE WATER PEOPLE

Aquarians are water-bearers, a cool, elemental occupation that may — with a little inventive updating of these mystic signs — be interpreted as the forerunner of science. The four elements, indeed, were the basis of all medieval speculation on the physical world, though most of the experiments by ancient doctors of physic were directed at transforming one element into another and, if possible, most of them into gold. Modern science is more diverse. But a cluster of modern scientists have been born under the water-bearing star, thereby endowing them, above all, with intellectual faculties, scepticism and a somewhat lukewarm temperament. Aquarians are consequently rather cold fish as lovers but ideally suited to hours in a sterile laboratory.

Thomas Edison, who brought music and light into the world with the electric lamp and the phonograph, was an Aquarian. So were Darwin and Galileo. These giants of electrophysics, zoology and astronomy have drawn the framework round our modern world. Who can forget the legend of the obstinate Italian dropping differently weighted balls from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to obscurantist sceptics below? Like many scientists, he had a spot of bother with

the authorities, in his case over the small question of whether the Sun went round the Earth or vice-versa. He recanted, and on his deathbed recanted his recantation — "epurus si muove". The lesson for those competing for research council grants, is that you can say what you like on television as long as you don't fake your test results.

Aquarians may be coolly rational, but with a ruling planet as frigid as Uranus and Pluto as a career planet, they are advised to avoid chilliness. The advice has fallen on some deaf ears. Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, trudged a cold path to fame, and Charles Lindbergh cannot have been much warmer up alone in the clouds above the Atlantic. Livingston and Stanley, however, who were born and met under the same star, had less of a cold coming of it.

The record certainly shows Aquarians as pioneers. Three of the greatest American Presidents, Lincoln, Roosevelt and Reagan, were born in this month, though perhaps only one them — or rather, his wife — bothered to consult the horoscope to learn its heavenly guidance. They were all, in their way, cool in the face of adversity; and indeed the world owes as much to a January temperament as it does to June fire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

The myths and making of Singapore's 'tiger' economy

From Mr Francis Davis

Sir, As a Labour Party member I was pleased to read Lord Rees-Mogg's advocacy of aspects of Singapore's welfare strategy as the potential focus for new Labour policy ("Blair could make it the year of the tiger", January 1). However, the myth that Singapore's success is a simple victory of market mechanisms needs to be challenged.

While it is true that Singapore citizens make compulsory contributions to the Central Provident Fund (CPF), the rate of interest return that they receive from government is much lower than the market would pay. The surplus that the State generates in this way consequently provides a pool of resources available to spend on strategic projects, such as the large government housebuilding programme (in which many personal CPF deposits are also subsequently invested).

Moreover, the real force for the development of savings in Singapore is not CPF deposits but the monopoly rents gleaned from highly profitable state-owned enterprises such as Singapore Telecom and the Port of Singapore Authority.

The People's Action Party has been able to mobilise these sources of funding to heavily subsidise incoming foreign investors. Those deemed to have "pioneer" status can often attract as much as 50 per cent of subsidy to each dollar of external investment.

Thus, whilst Singapore might not be able to manipulate the world econ-

omy, she has been able to aggressively pursue economic goals and sought-after outcomes at home. This, of course, has all been helped by a highly regulated wage market, full employment and a predominantly young population.

The "tiger" economies have much to teach us but their example needs to be critically examined. In addition to Singapore's state-led successes new Labour should take account of European good practice in relying on the voluntary sector (which in Singapore is relatively small) to reflect Western social diversity and to ensure civil liberties.

In the meantime Lord Rees-Mogg is to be congratulated for raising the issue and Labour's front bench should be encouraged to learn from what is best in the "tiger" experience.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS DAVIS,
19 Twissell Thorne,
Church Crookham, Hampshire.

From Mr David Hughes

Sir, William Rees-Mogg is right in pointing to the success of Singapore's Central Provident Fund and the potential for transplanting the concept to Britain. It is just one of several Singapore strategies which could work well here. But there is no chance of implementing most of them while Britain remains within the EU.

Until 1965 Lee Kuan Yew was the most ardent of federalists, advocating

and temporarily achieving Singapore's federation with the Malaysian states. He saw no future for a tiny, independent Singapore. He subscribed to much the same line now pushed by the European federalists: going it alone was widely seen as an almost unthinkable option.

When the split with Malaysia came in 1965 Lee wept in front of the television cameras. Yet the same man went on to prove that a politically and economically independent Singapore could not only survive but prosper to an extent unimaginable thirty years ago.

The economic success of Singapore must surely say something to those who argue that Britain has no future outside a federal Europe. The analogy is not exact but it is close enough. If tiny Singapore (population barely 3 million) can thrive on its own, why should an independent Britain be just a pipe dream?

Independent decision-making has been a vital part of Singapore's success. Although it is an enthusiastic member of the Association of South East Asian Nations it could never give up its cherished sovereignty to anything remotely like the extent that Britain has already surrendered it to the EU.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HUGHES,
13 Spring Lodge Close,
Eastbourne, Sussex.
January 3.

Loyalty to party and to principles at Westminster

From Sir Anthony Grant, MP for Cambridgeshire South West (Conservative)

Sir, One of the reasons suggested for the defection of Emma Nicholson (letter, January 1, 3) was lack of a government job. This has become endemic among modern MPs. No sooner are they elected than they pester for preferment. If frustrated they choose the most convenient controversial issue on which to rebel.

Unfortunately this all too often proves successful. Either the leadership responds with something to keep the MP quiet or the MP becomes indoctrinated with media attention resulting often in more agreeable, and better remunerated, activity. Those content merely to care for their constituents and, broadly, support the party which elected them, are taken for granted.

The worrying effect of all this is a blurring of the distinction, so fundamental to parliamentary democracy, between the legislature and the executive. This is a key area of reform for the next Parliament.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY GRANT,
House of Commons,
January 2.

From Mr Dick Taverne

Sir, Emma Nicholson has been attacked for her "betrayal" of the Conservative Party. It is one of the less attractive features of our political ethos that to give up your principles for the sake of your party is regarded as a virtue; to give up your party for the sake of your principles is regarded as a sin.

Parties are an important part of our democratic institutions; through them people can combine to achieve common aims and put shared beliefs into practice. But parties have no special moral virtue in themselves which makes leaving them a "betrayal". Parties change. When they abandon the principles or beliefs for which you have joined them, it is more honour-

able to leave than to stay. To argue for the re-election of a party which you actually think will do more harm than good is to live a lie.

Incidentally, I did not defect from Labour to the SDP (letter, December 30). I did join the SDP when it was launched, but I left the Labour Party in 1972 and was re-elected twice as an independent, describing myself as a social democrat eight years before the SDP was founded.

Yours faithfully,
DICK TAVERNE,
60 Cambridge Street, SW1,
January 4.

From Mr L. P. Cleminson

Sir, An MP is elected to represent all the electors of a constituency, not just the party who nominated him or her. In any event, because of the first-past-the-post system, many MPs are elected by a minority of their constituency voters.

It follows that Emma Nicholson may well be acting in the best interests

Election dates

From Mr Walter Grey

Sir, Once again, in the late stages of a parliament, there is talk of an early general election, intensifying and prolonging economic as well as political uncertainty.

But, barring a government's defeat in a confidence vote, or a similar crisis not soluble by other means, should the date of the election continue to be left to the convenience (or machinations) of the already over-powerful Prime Minister?

Isn't it time, once the next election is out of the way, for an all-party agreement in Parliament at the earliest opportunity to institute fixed-term (say, four-year) parliaments instead?

Yours faithfully,
WALTER GREY,
12 Arden Road, Finchley, N3,
January 4.

Honours uneven

From Judge Nicholas Beddard

Sir, Of the 29 Knights Bachelor in today's list of New Year Honours, eight are shown as professors. There would seem to be a degree of over-representation here.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BEDDARD,
The Old School,
Sudbourne, Nr Orford, Suffolk,
December 30.

A racing cert

From Mr P. W. Esling

Sir, Congratulations to Thunderer on his winning the Racing Post National Press Challenge for racing tipsters (reports, Sport, January 1).

I see that he won by reason of the fact that he lost less than any of the other tipsters and that when the year of the competition ended he still had £760.50 in hand of the bank of £1,000 with which he started.

This is a neat illustration of the old racing adage that the only sure way to make a small fortune backing horses is to start with a large fortune.

Yours faithfully,
PETER W. ESLING,
3 Lysneydyd Cottages,
Drefach Felindre, Llandysul, Dyfed,
January 1.

Sports letters, page 30

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Ready solution to Army shortages

From Viscount Slim

Sir, Anyone who watched that brilliant film about the Gurkhas on BBC2 on Boxing Day (letter, December 30) must be absolutely mystified that at a time when the British Army is gravely overstretched, with over 50 per cent of its available strength committed to active operations at any one time and its combat arms under-recruited from about 2,000 to 3,000, the Ministry of Defence continues cutting the Brigade of Gurkhas, an integral part of the British Army, from some 8,000 to as little as 2,500.

It is true that, perhaps as a result of parliamentary and other pressures, ministers have now agreed to retain, for three more years, another 400 of the 1,700 Gurkhas who are due for redundancy.

But with recruiting of first-class Gurkha material presenting no problem at all, so graphically illustrated in the film, compared to the present difficulties of British "teeth arms" recruitment, so severely damaged and run down owing to the savage government defence cuts, the question must be asked, "why only 400?" Surely at least one extra combat battalion of Gurkhas, some 700 to 800 strong, could be retained without difficulty.

Splitting 400 Gurkhas into small packets of platoon and company size to group up understrength and poorly recruited British infantry battalions is not satisfactory.

A further huttation of Gurkhas, easily immediately available now, would go a considerable way to alleviate the ongoing overstretched and undermanned state of the British Army. This, combined with a major government-supported and financed national recruitment campaign, is urgently needed to overcome severe manpower shortages.

Any government that slashes its defence forces to the brink has at least the duty to ensure its remaining combat units are fully manned and capable of operations from full strength. The nation has a right to expect nothing less.

The BBC film ended by quoting those splendid words: "The Gurkha, the bravest of the brave; never had a country more faithful friends than you." We really do treat our true friends in a most extraordinary way.

Yours etc.
SLIM,
House of Lords,
January 3.

Caring by numbers

From Mr Colin L. Bowater

Sir, My army number (letters, December 18, 27; January 3) is now more than 40 years old and I continue to use it daily: the last three digits for the combination lock on my briefcase, last four for my bank card PIN and last eight digits for the password on my computer.

I will never forget it and I don't need to write it down. On reflection, it's just about the most useful thing I brought with me into civil street.

I am sure you will understand if I refrain from disclosing the number to you.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN L. BOWATER,
15 Grayburn Close,
Chalfont St Giles,
Buckinghamshire,
January 3.

Tail order

From Mr Ian Bryant

Sir, Mr Richard Anderson's suggestion (letter, December 29) that passengers might be prepared to pay a modest increase in fares for a bit more space will find no favour with scheduled airlines. They need to make economy class uncomfortable to persuade claustrophobic travellers that the huge additional cost of flying club/business class is justified.

No finance director is going to sanction the extra cost if his executives can be expected to face foreign clients with bodies refreshed and brains razor-sharp after relaxing flights in economy cabins.

But I am sure there's scope for charter airlines to charge more in return for more leg and vent room. Many people would be happy to pay £200 instead of £130 for a flight to the Canaries provided the seat space was designed for the average 5ft 10in, 12st man instead of for a juvenile conurbationist.

Yours faithfully,
IAN BRYANT,
Hipping Hall,
Cowan Bridge,
Kirkby, Lonsdale, Cumbria,
January 1.

From Mr Stephen Cox

Sir, I sympathise with Mr Richard Anderson's predicament inside acropalanes.

I too am oft tall, and find that the length of the handles of garden forks and spades must have been set at least 100 years ago.

It is for this reason, and not laziness, that I am compelled to delegate the digging of the vegetable garden to my wife.

Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN COX,
Eynhallow,
Sandy Lane,
Rushmore, Farnham, Surrey,
January 1.

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
January 4: The Princess Royal this morning attended, as Principal Guest Speaker, the Fifth Oxford Farming Conference at the Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, and was accompanied by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Sir Ashley Parsons, Bt.

The King of Spain celebrates his 80th birthday today.
The Grand Duke of Luxembourg celebrates his 75th birthday today.

Birthdays today

Mr Alfred Brendel, concert pianist, 65; Mr Tony Burke, environmentalist, 49; Mrs Jean Clark, president, National Council of Women of Great Britain, 61; Mr Terry Davis, MP, 58; the Earl of Dudley, 76; Sir Frank Hartley, CBE, Vice-Chancellor, London University, 85; Sir Alan Hume, civil servant, 63; Miss Diane Kerton, actress, 50; Lord Kingsdown, KC, 69; Miss Jan Leeming, broadcaster, 54; Mr Maurice Pollin, pianist, 54; Sir Norman Price, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 81; Major-General H. Quinlan, 90; General Sir John Sillibon, 81; the Hon Mrs Alison Wright, director-general, British Invisibles, 51; Lord Winton, 74.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Jean-Baptiste Say, political economist, 1767; Robert Morrison, founder of Protestant missions in China, 1782; John Burke, genealogist and founder of Burke's Peerage, 1787; King Camp Gillette, inventor of the safety razor, 1864; Dr Loe Wiscovitz, 1888; Konrad Adenauer, first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1894-95; Cologne, 1876; Humbert Wolfe, poet, 1880; the ship in London on January 5, 1944; Jack Lovelock, surgeon and Olympic 1,500m gold medalist (1948), 1924; Cushing, 1904; Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan 1973-77, 1929.

DEATHS: Edward the Confessor, King of England (1066-1067), 1066; Joseph Gillot, painter of the steel pen, Birmingham, 1873; Sir Ernest Shackleton, explorer, South Georgia, Antarctica, 1922; Calvin Coolidge, 30th American President 1923-29, Northampton, Massachusetts, 1933; Amy Johnson, aviator, on a flight across the Thames Estuary, 1941; Sunny Liston, boxer, Las Vegas, 1971.

One-day cricket was born when England played Australia at Melbourne because the Test match had been abandoned after the previous day's rain, 1971.

Luncheon

Blacksmith's Company
The High Commissioner for Canada was the guest of honour at the Epiphany luncheon of the Blacksmith's Company, held yesterday at Inghilders' Hall, Mr Clifford Champion, Prime Warden, presided.

Guernsey keepers leave rock for the last time

By LEILA LINTON

KEEPERS at the last manned rock lighthouse in the southern British Isles came ashore for the first time yesterday. Les Hanois, two miles off the coast of Guernsey, was built in 1862 and is now fully automated, its light controlled from Harwich.

The three keepers, looking tired and pleased to be leaving, were taken off the rock yesterday morning by helicopter. Dave Appleby, the principal lighthouse keeper who entered the profession 39 years ago, when oil lamps were still providing the light, said he had mixed feelings about leaving Les Hanois.

"It was my home for six months of the year. I felt glad to be going, but also sad. It was a special experience and a way of life, a Victorian way of life," he said.

"Lighthouse keepers who worked offshore got a lot of respect from those who worked onshore because it was just much tougher. Recently we have been surrounded by rough seas and fog, which is quite unusual. It made us feel more isolated."

Mr Appleby said he was relieved to be getting off the rock. "Les Hanois is very small and restricted. There is not much room in the tower at all, although one plus was that there was a small area where we could get out and sit in the sun in the summer."

The tower at Les Hanois reaches 105ft above high tide, its lamp has a range of 23 miles and there is a fog signal with a three-mile range.

In 1982, new technology and a desire to save money saw the start of conversion of lighthouses round the coast of the British Isles. All 248 will be automated by 1998.

The cost of paying keepers and flying them to Les Hanois was £100,000 a year. Automating the light will save £1 million over the next 15 years for Trinity House.

It will also mean six redundancies among lighthouse keepers, although the three keepers leaving Les Hanois will start work on other lighthouses after a break. Mr Appleby will move to St Catherine's on the Isle of Wight. Peter Bolton will go to Portland Bill in Dorset and



Ready for lift-off: keepers of Les Hanois lighthouse await the helicopter to take them ashore

Dave McGovern will be based at Alderney. Trinity House plans to complete the automation process of its 72 lighthouses in two years and stopped recruiting lighthouse keepers 15 years ago. However, lighthouses still attract people from all walks of life who continue to apply for jobs as keepers. A few manned lighthouses still exist in Britain: eight in England and Wales, three in

Ireland and 11 in Scotland, of which five are offshore.

"The idea of working in such isolation seems to appeal to them," Howard Cooper, of Trinity House, said.

The image many people have of keepers as watchers of the sea is a romantic myth. Mr Cooper said the role of keepers was not to keep a coastal lookout, but simply to ensure that the light and the fog signals were in operation.

Mr J.R.W. Fellowes and Miss A.J. Nicol

The engagement is announced between James, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Robert Fellowes, of Newmarket, Suffolk, and Rebecca Lucinda, daughter of John and Anne Rae, of St Albans. The wedding will take place in New Zealand.

Mr G.R.I. Smyly and Miss K. Crocker

The engagement is announced between Giles, son of Mr and Mrs David Smyly, of Dorset, Herefordshire, and Kim, daughter of the late Mr Raymond Crocker and of Mrs Peter Deal, of Cranham, Essex.

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Forthcoming marriages

Mr A.J. Allan and Miss S.C. Warr

The engagement is announced between Andrew, twin son of the late Mr Michael Allan and of Mrs John Sparks, of Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey, and Sian, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs J.J. Warr, of Holyport, Berkshire.

Mr H.N. Berger and Miss L.P. Halliday

The engagement is announced between James, youngest son of Mr and Mrs M.D. Berger, of Woodrising, Burwash, East Sussex, and Lynn Patricia (Paddington), daughter of Mr and Mrs K.A. Halliday, of Hadden, Bingley, West Yorkshire.

Mr C.R.S. Blomfield and Miss E.E. Tili

The engagement is announced between Charles, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Simon Blomfield, of Petersfield, Hampshire, and Emma, elder daughter of Mr Paul Tili, of Selbourne, Hampshire, and Mrs Carolyn Highton, of Petersfield, Hampshire.

Mr J.M. Court and Miss K.D. Payne

The engagement is announced between James, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Court, of Leigh, Kent, and Karen, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Payne, of Ordino, Andorra.

Mr R. Dempster and Miss M.E. Foreman

The engagement is announced between Ross, son of Mr and Mrs William Dempster, of Corby, Northamptonshire, and Mary Elizabeth, daughter of Mr and Mrs Peter Foreman, of Guildford, Surrey.

Mr N.R.C.R. De Smet and Miss C.E.M. Wilson

The engagement is announced between Nicolas, only son of M. Francis De Smet, of Brussels, and Mme Chantal Michel, of Brussels, and Charlotte, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Richard Wilson, of Cambridge.

Mr R.J. Devall and Miss E.C. Bewley

The engagement is announced between Richard James, only son of Mr and Mrs Norman Devall, of Sutton Valence, Kent, and Elizabeth Caroline, second daughter of the Hon Mr Justice Bewley and Mrs Bewley, of The Peak, Hong Kong.

Mr L.S. Ellison and Miss E.M. O'Flynn

The engagement is announced between Lance, elder son of Mr Charles Ellison, of Grop, Dunham, Norfolk, and Mrs Geraldine Ellison, of Burnham Market, Norfolk, and Emer, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael O'Flynn, of Monkstown, County Dublin.

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Dr T.K. Johansen and Miss F.C.C. Sheffield

The engagement is announced between Thomas, youngest son of Mr Kjeller Johansen and Mrs Steen Johansen, of Copenhagen, Denmark, and Friben, Candida Chrymme, daughter of Mr David A. Sheffield, of San Luis, Menorca, and Mrs Victoria Hamilton-Binney, of Notting Hill, London.

Mr R.W.R. Johnston and Miss G.C. Isaac

The engagement is announced between Rory, youngest son of Dr and Mrs Jonathan Johnston, of Roquesteron, France, and Georgina, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs David Isaac, of Washington DC, USA.

Mr J.J. King III and Miss G.L. Wade

The engagement is announced between John, son of the late Mr and Mrs John J. King Junior, of Philadelphia, and Gail Linda, daughter of Mrs Betty Grace Lewis, of Surbiton, Surrey, and the late William Frederick George Lewis.

Mr E.D.E. Koolis and Miss K.J. Ait

The engagement is announced between James, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Koolis, of Salisbury, Wiltshire, and Katharine, daughter of Mr and Mrs Patrick Ait, of Weybridge, Surrey.

Mr J.P. McFarlane and Miss S.J. Willis

The engagement is announced between Jonathan Peter, eldest son of Dr and Mrs T. McFarlane, of Didbury, Manchester, and Stephanie Jane, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Willis, of Garsfield, near Wrexham.

Mr A.S.J. Moorhouse and Miss A.L. Sockling

The engagement is announced between Adam, son of Mr and Mrs Timothy Moorhouse, of Leigh, Surrey, and Amanda, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs David Sockling, of Chelsea, London.

Mr P.J. Murrin and Miss A.A. Gordon

The engagement is announced between Philip James, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Peter Murrin, of Sully, South Glamorgan, and Alison Anne, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Stuart Gordon, of Burnham, Buckinghamshire.

Dr A.J. Padkin and Miss A.J. Wood

The engagement is announced between Andrew, son of Mrs Joan Padkin and the late Mr James Ferguson Padkin, of Sale, Cheshire, and Alison, youngest daughter of Dr John and Dr Bridget Wood, of Dornington, Hereford.

Mr N.J. Redmond and Miss R.L. Rae

The engagement is announced between Nicholas Jon, son of Patrick and Patricia Redmond, of Feltham, New Zealand, and Rebecca Lucinda, daughter of John and Anne Rae, of St Albans. The wedding will take place in New Zealand.

Mr G.R.I. Smyly and Miss K. Crocker

The engagement is announced between Giles, son of Mr and Mrs David Smyly, of Dorset, Herefordshire, and Kim, daughter of the late Mr Raymond Crocker and of Mrs Peter Deal, of Cranham, Essex.

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Mr N. Paine and Miss J. Wainwright

The engagement is announced between Nick, son of Mr and Mrs W.L. Paine, of Haslemere, Surrey, and Jayne, daughter of Mrs J. Wainwright, of Wistaston, Cheshire.

Mr A.J. Thompson and Miss R.H. Leckie

The engagement is announced between Alistair, younger son of Mr and Mrs Ian Thompson, of Meare, Somerset, and Rosie, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Stuart Leckie, of Bridge of Allan, Shropshire and Hong Kong.

Mr E.E.E. Vorley and Miss K. Greenbank

The engagement is announced between Brett Eamon Edward, son of the late Mr John Vorley, and of Mrs Irene Spiker, of Farnborough, Hampshire, and Kate, only daughter of Mr and Mrs John Greenbank, of Haslingford, Cambridge.

Mr R.E.H. West and Miss V. Younger

The engagement is announced between Robert, eldest son of Mr and Mrs J.A.H. West, of Remenham, Henley-on-Thames, and Vanessa, second daughter of Dr and Mrs D. Younger, of Makenzie, Kelso.

Mr T.M. Wood and Miss A.N.D. Willett

The engagement is announced between Timothy, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Simon Wood, of Exeter, Devon, and Alexandra, younger daughter of the late Mr Richard Willett and of Mrs Patricia Willett, of Pinner, Middlesex.

Thanksgiving service

Army Dental Service
A service of thanksgiving to mark the 75th anniversary of the Army Dental Service was held yesterday at the Royal Garrison Church of All Saints, Aldershot. The Rev R.A. Owen, CF, officiated. Brigadier C. Roberts, director, Army Dental Service, and Private L. Staley, Royal Army Dental Corps, read the lessons. The Rev Dr V. Dobbin, Chaplain General, gave an address. Afterwards, Dr Dobbin unveiled commemorative windows and a bronze of a "Field Dental Team" in the Officers' Mess. Past and present members of the Army Dental Corps and the Royal Army Dental Corps were among those present.

Church appointments

The Rev Dr Ian Jorjy, Assistant Curate, Ferryhill, St Luke (Durham) is to be Priest-in-charge, South Weald, St Peter, and the Bishop of Bradford's Research Officer (Chelmsford).
The Rev Jonathan MacGillivray, Vicar, St John the Evangelist, Hurst, Ashton under Lytle, is to be Diocesan Director of Ordinands and LNSM Officer (Manchester).
The Rev Philip Miller, to be Priest-in-charge, All Saints and Martyrs, Langley and Holy Trinity, Parkfield (Manchester).
The Rev Peter Smith, Honorary Curate, St Michael and All Angels, Camberwell, is to be LNSM, St George, Waddon (Southwark).

Legal appointments

The following to be full-time chairmen of social security appeal tribunals, medical appeal tribunals, disability appeal tribunals and child support appeal tribunals: Derek Kinningsham in the North East; David John Teagle and Jonathan Arnold Rosser in the South East; Roger Peter Ball in the North West Region.

Schools news

Queenwood School
The Spring Term at Queenwood School begins on Sunday, January 7, and ends on Saturday, March 23. The Queenwood Tennis Centre will be opened officially on Saturday, April 27.

The Queenwood Choral Week-end takes place from March 8-9, a weekend of rehearsal and a concert for performances of two Handel Coronation Anthems and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*. Friends of the school welcome details from the Music Department.

The Queenwood Subscription Concert Series will continue this term, full details from the Music Department.

Reed's School
Spring Term begins on January 8 and ends on March 22, with Christopher Bilmes continuing as School Captain and Robert Hilton, Captain of Hockey.

Sixth Form Scholarship
Examinations will take place on January 29/30. The Annual Andrew Reed Lecture will be given by Rabbi Hugo Gryn on March 7 and The Bishop of Dorchester will conduct the Confirmation Service in School Chapel on March 14.

Annual meeting
The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners

The Society held its fourth Annual General Meeting and its Branch Chairmen's National Conference at the Lansdowne Club on December 3, 1995.

Present were Chairman and representatives from 24 Branches. The proceedings were chaired by Mr Geoffrey Shindler, the Chairman of the Society.

Premium Bonds

The £1 million prize in the Premium Bond draw for January was won by a 19-year-old student, ISEL 27570. The winner lives in Devon, and has a bond holding of £2,400. £100,000; 3555 60944, winner has a holding of £2,120 and comes from Hampshire; 1925 95939, £10,000, Dorsetshire; 15900; 107N 52273, £1,400, East Sussex; 10DS 38635, 4,891, Shropshire; 20CIS 23938, 2,000, Shropshire; 12S00; 16EN 04998, £2,068, Gloucestershire; 33DL 92587, £5,003, West Glamorgan; 34NP 31548, £20,000, Essex; 13ZF 07972, £8,150, West Midlands.

Latest wills

Mr Anthony James Lavell, of Warmingley, West Sussex, left estate valued at £4,253,950 net. Mr Gobind Hardasani Daryal, of London W2, £919,431.

BMD'S: 0171 782 7272
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

John said: "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have known that they had a son.

JEREMY J. BEADLE

PERSONAL COLUMN

thine the afternoon evening classes at the Glasgow Technical College to round off his education. He joined ICI in 1957 and remained with them until 1972, heading a team of researchers. His work there centred on both fire retardants and the controlled crystallisation of common inorganic materials. He brought the two fields together with his invention of Monnex in the mid-1960s, a dry fire extinguisher.

Long before bio-inorganic chemistry became the fashionable area it is today, Birchall was reflecting on nature's use of inorganic compounds — silicates and carbonates, for example — and speculating on the strong mechanical properties of shells compared with the brittleness of man-made materials such as cement and concrete, which were often based on the same

inorganic fibres were obvious candidates for fire retardant purposes, but Birchall did not want to stain inorganic fibres in a similar way to synthetic polymer fibres. The result, in 1972, was Saffil, a fibre made up of "whiskers" of alumina with excellent heat and chemical resistance, and which could be used as an insulating blanket in everything from space vehicles to car engines.

Birchall was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1982, and appointed OBE in 1990. He retired from ICI two years later, and moved on to Keele University as Professor of Inorganic Chemistry. He was 10 years away from retirement then and was enjoying his work with students when a road accident caused his death.

He is survived by his two sons, his wife having predeceased him.

ON THIS DAY

From the doorway only one end of the sarcophagus could be seen, but that was sufficient to show what a magnificent piece of work it is, and its vastness, the superb nature of its decoration and carving, and the dazzling of the golden doors and sides of the various shrines, all combined to create an awe-inspiring impression, which was accentuated by the mystic mauve lights cast on the scene by the electric reflector behind us. It was a most thrilling moment, and we gazed on the spectacle spellbound and silent.

NEWS

Stock Exchange chief sacked

Michael Lawrence, the £342,000-a-year Chief Executive of the London Stock Exchange, was dismissed after a revolt by several powerful stockbroking firms.

The reason given by the Stock Exchange for the unexpected dismissal of Mr Lawrence was a "loss of confidence". John Kemp-Welch, Chairman of the Stock Exchange, admitted that the departure of the second chief executive to be sacked in two and a half years, was "a setback". Page 1

Blair promises low taxes

Tony Blair promised low taxes and low inflation in a Labour-run Britain. In his most audacious move yet to capture the Conservative mantle for competence, he told Far East businessmen that a Labour government would be better placed than the Tories to keep Britain competitive. Page 1

Thatcher on attack

Baroness Thatcher has joined General Sir Peter de la Billière, Britain's Gulf War commander, in criticising the RAF's low-level bombing tactics during the 1991 conflict. Page 1

Boy questioned

Police were questioning a 15-year-old boy in connection with the murder of Philip Lawrence, the West London headmaster who was stabbed when he went to protect a pupil. Page 1

Private welfare

Labour leaders are to examine plans for privatising the £90-billion welfare budget. Page 2

Kicked to death

The twin brother of a 19-year-old shopworker from Stratford-upon-Avon, who was kicked to death by a gang of youths taunting his father, wept as he told of his family's grief. Page 3

Princess hits out

The Princess Royal criticised the water industry for allowing a year of shortages in a country with abundant rainfall. Page 4

Heaps of money

Camelot put £60 million on display to show the nation what it would be playing for in this week-end's lottery. Deep below the Royal Bank of Scotland in north London, bundles of £10 notes were piled 5ft 4in high, 13ft 6in wide and 3ft 4in deep. Page 4

Chewing over the secret of success

After 115 years scientists have been called in, with the aid of £750,000, to discover the secret behind the chewy Rowntree fruit pastille. Nestlé's York-based research centre and the Applied Biology department at the city's university have joined forces to find out just what makes them taste so good. The pastille was created from an old cooking recipe. Page 1

War crimes case

The first man in Britain to face prosecution for alleged Nazi crimes, was discharged on one of the four counts of murder allegedly committed in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Page 5

University threat

Universities are threatening to admit more foreign students and turn away British undergraduates this year in protest at a funding squeeze. Page 6

Paper tigers

The Government and Labour have locked horns on the critical battleground of the election campaign: the economy. The weapons are statistics, marshalled in newspaper advertisements. Page 8

Bugging row

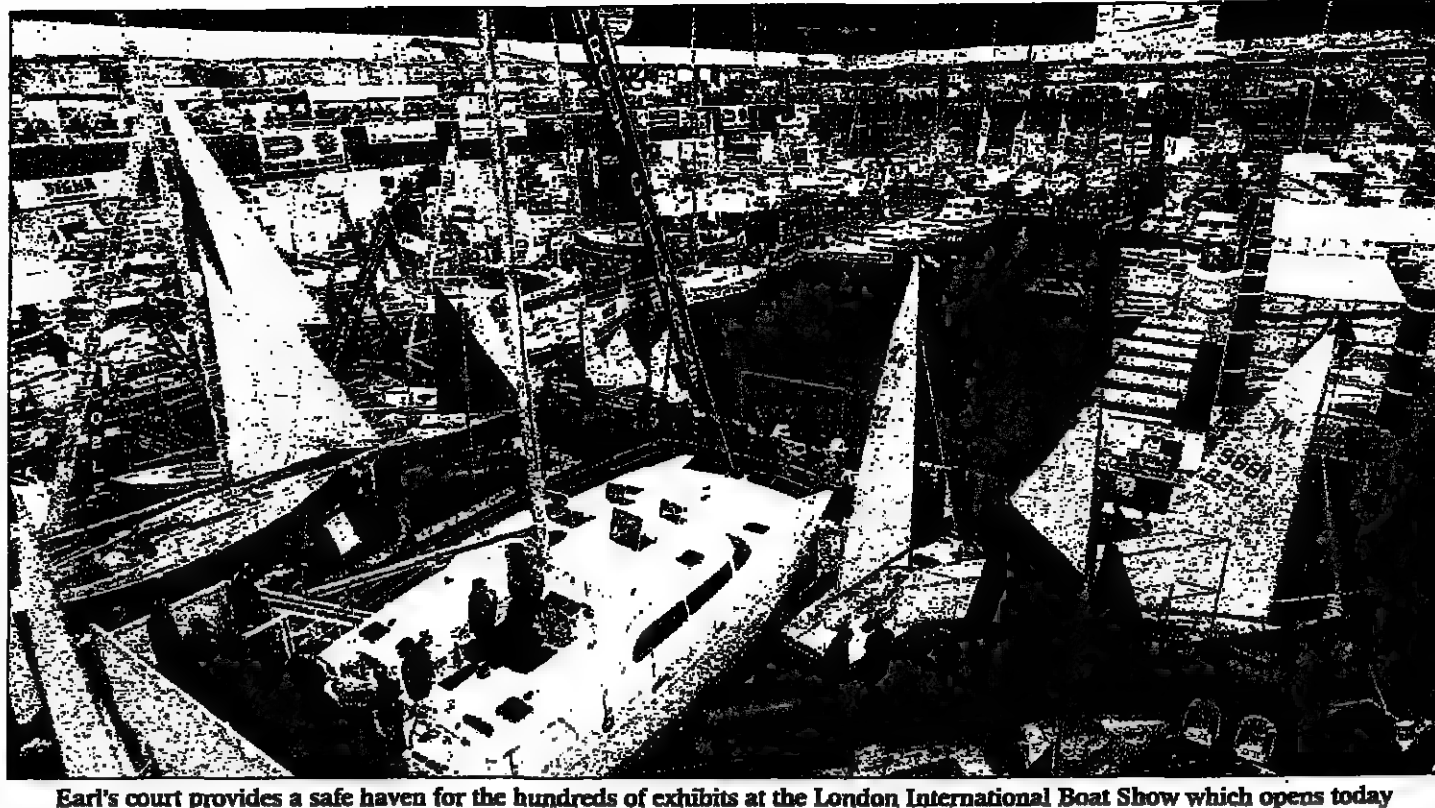
A row broke in South Africa over the bugging of senior police officers that has drawn in the National Intelligence Agency and Thabo Mbeki, the First Deputy President. Page 9

Deportation fight

A Saudi Arabian dissident who faces deportation to the Caribbean island of Dominica, said that he would take his fight to the High Court. Page 10

Arson fear

The mysterious death of Jean Schillinger, one of France's top chefs, who invented some of the most aromatic sauces, is believed to have involved crime. Page 11



Earl's court provides a safe haven for the hundreds of exhibits at the London International Boat Show which opens today

BUSINESS

Admission: The President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, admitted that he misled the Commons about how £850,000 was poured into a failed computer firm. Page 19

Video Arts: The successful training company founded in 1972 by John Cleese and Sir Antony Jay, co-author of *Yes Minister*, is to be listed on the stock market after being bought by MediaKey. Page 19

Currency: The dollar surged to its highest level against the yen for nearly two years buoyed by hopes of an end to the impasse over the US budget. Page 19

Markets: The FT-SE 100 fell 1.5 to 3714.1. Sterling rose from £3.4 to 84.0 after a fall from \$1.5510 to \$1.5492 but a rise from DM2.2339 to DM2.2556. Page 22

SPORT

Cricket: South Africa beat England by ten wickets in the final Test in Cape Town to win the series 1-0. Hansie Cronje, South Africa's captain, was fined half his match fee for dissent surrounding the run-out of Graham Thorpe. Page 36

Rugby union: Graham Shiel, the Scotland centre, has signed for Leicester. Page 32

Football: Terry Venables will launch England's preparations for the European championship finals by two training sessions in the next six weeks. Page 32

Racing: A review of how the best horses are assessed is to be carried out after controversy surrounded the publication of the International Classification for the 1995 Flat season. Page 31

Naked ambition: *Showgirls*, which opens in Britain next week, has been banned in Ireland because of its explicit sexual content. But will it prove to be the year's biggest turn-off? Page 26

Beethoven recycled: The Lindsay Quartet is in superb form to launch its cycle of all the Beethoven string quartets at the Wigmore Hall. Page 26

Georgian revival: Will the rejuvenated George Michael, starting a new career on Virgin Records, achieve what Britpop cannot, and crack the US market? Page 27

Irish dingles: Best of the new albums is a compendium of traditional Irish music; also reviewed is a release from the veteran American rapper LL Cool J. Page 27

IN THE TIMES

WIN A DINGHY
A £1,700 Topper dinghy to be won in 10/15, the magazine for young Times readers

ONE-MAN SHOW
Ginny Dougany meets Albert Finney, the star of *The Run of the Country*

TV LISTINGS

Preview: Cybill Shepherd stars in a sit-com with more than a hint of autobiography. *Cybill* (Channel 4, 9pm). Review: Lynne Truss is intrigued by a new series about forensic science. Page 35

ECONOMY

Number wars

The Tory economic message is certainly the best hope that John Major possesses. But it will not be an easy winner. Page 15

National interests

The Home Secretary probably has the power to deport Dr Masari. His departure may serve our immediate commercial interests: but the moral cost is high. Page 15

The water people

Aquarians seem all, in their way, cool in the face of adversity; and indeed the world owes as much to a January temperament as it does to June fire. Page 15

BERNARD LEVIN

Roll up! Roll up! Come and see the dying babies! See the dissidents being thrown into jail! If you are lucky you might see Wei Jingsheng himself being beaten up! If you are very lucky, you may see Wang Dan — a young student as brave as Wei Jingsheng himself, who speaks for democracy and so far has served a four-year stretch. Page 14

PETER RIDDELL

The political world is divided between those who regard Sir Richard Scott as a brave, crusading judge who has exposed wrongdoing and cover-ups at the heart of Government, and those who see his inquiry as unfair to civil servants, and naïve about the workings of foreign policy. Page 14

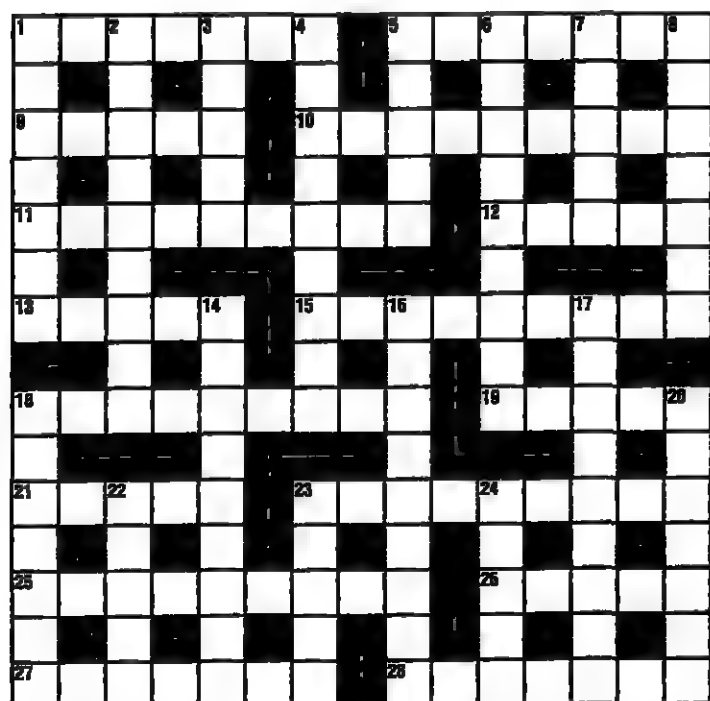
PHILIP HOWARD

The old enemy of fish must restrain his greed. Or he will end up on a silent sea. Page 14

Sir Andrew Carnworth, managing director of Barings, 1955-74; Terence Cuneo, portrait painter; Jeremy J. Beadle, music critic; Professor Derek Birchall, research chemist. Page 17

Mechanics of Singapore's "tiger" economy; solution to overstretched British Army; loyalty to party and principles. Page 15

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,056



- ACROSS**
- Saw typical dog restrained by lead (7).
 - Right treatment for a case — she's supposedly blind (7).
 - I may arrange to supply period books (5).
 - Royal staff require training in two points (5).
 - Retirement cover for person at the top (9).
 - Article about a new role for Macbeth? (5).
 - Positive call — a run snatched — they eventually make centuries! (5).
 - Having called in, anaesthetised an exotic creature (5-4).
 - Styling of a long coat, not short on sides (9).
 - Clear away the mess made by second youngest (3,2).
 - Very authoritative pronunciation, shortly, in old language (5).
 - If pushed, one may turn blades against blades (4-5).
- DOWN**
- Philanderer's surprised expression following drama (7).
 - Something outstanding about rough outline (9).
 - Player occasionally making a run? (5).
 - Analysis of mechanical failure (9).
 - Military group has a climbing expedition (5).
 - Plan showing layers of rock and stone (9).
 - One takes over half of outlandish resort (5).
 - Artist using paint, see, without a modification (7).
 - It's wise to give way over bill, with promises to pay (9).
 - A useful thing when making charge, including small discount (9).
 - Use a keyboard to insert legal document into Melville's book (9).
 - Get around or possibly above it (7).
 - Type of flooring that's standard — nonetheless one not required (7).
 - Small conflict in the outskirts of Düsseldorf (5).
 - Northern VIP put in position to host monarch? (5).
 - I had radio buff turn up Messiah (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,055

ZILLION REDUCED
E L E Y E N T
A N G E L O A K E L O U S
L L A R V A E P
O V E R T E M P E R A T E
I S E U N I
A S S A F E A S H O U S E S
P E R S O N I V E
L E T T E R O F F E R I T
E R N C A T A
B R A S S I E R E T W E A P
F E T N E R I
I N F E R O B S T R U S I V E
A I U N R A W C
N E C K T I E E X P A N S I O N

Times Two Crossword, page 36

TIMES WEATHERCAST

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 5001 followed by the appropriate code.

Region	Forecast
Greater London	701
East Surrey/Sussex	702
Devon/Hants & IOW	703
Doncaster/Leeds	704
Wiltshire/Somerset	705
Bedfordshire/Bedford	706
Northamptonshire	707
West Midlands & Shropshire	708
Shropshire/Hereford & Wales	709
Central Midlands	710
East Midlands	711
Lincolnshire	712
W & S Yorkshire & Darlington	713
W & S Yorkshire	714
W & S Yorkshire	715
W & S Yorkshire	716
W & S Yorkshire	717
W & S Yorkshire	718
W & S Yorkshire	719
W & S Yorkshire	720
W & S Yorkshire	721
W & S Yorkshire	722
W & S Yorkshire	723
W & S Yorkshire	724
W & S Yorkshire	725
W & S Yorkshire	726
W & S Yorkshire	727
W & S Yorkshire	728
W & S Yorkshire	729
W & S Yorkshire	730

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

Region	Forecast
London & SE England	731
East of London	732
East of London	733
East of London	734
East of London	735
East of London	736
East of London	737
East of London	738
East of London	739
East of London	740
East of London	741
East of London	742
East of London	743
East of London	744
East of London	745
East of London	746
East of London	747
East of London	748
East of London	749
East of London	750

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Penzance, Cornwall, 12°C (54°F). Lowest day temp: Bridgwater, Somerset, 3°C (37°F). Highest sunrise: Falmouth, Cornwall, 3.26.

FORECAST

General: much of England and Wales will stay dry. Most eastern areas will stay dry until evening and there should be some bright spells. Rain over Wales and southwest England will edge east during the day. Southwestern areas should in turn become drier and brighter. Northern Ireland will start wet but brighter mainly dry weather is likely by afternoon. Most of Scotland will start dry with eastern areas having some sunshine. Rain will spread east across Scotland in the afternoon.

London, SE England, E Anglia, E England, Central N, NE England: some bright or sunny spells. Rain by evening. Wind southeast moderate to locally fresh. Max 8C to 8C (41F to 46F).

Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands, NW England: bright start. Rain in afternoon, clearing to evening. Wind southeast moderate or fresh.

Maximum 7C to 9C (45F to 48F).

Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales, N Wales, Isle of Man, N Ireland: rain at first. Sunshine and a few showers later. Wind southeast strong becoming south moderate or fresh. Mild, 8C to 10C (46F to 50F).

Lake District, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll: dry start. Rain later. Wind southeast moderate to fresh. Max 7C or 8C (45F to 46F).

Bornes, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, NW Scotland: dry start. Rain spreading east through the afternoon. Snow on highest ground. Wind southeast fresh to strong. Max 6C or 7C (43F to 45F).

Orkney, Shetland: mostly cloudy. Drizzle at times. Wind southeast strong to gale force. Max 6C (43F).

Outlook: rain spreading east; brighter, showery weather on Sunday.

AROUND BRITAIN

Region	Forecast
Aberdeen	751
Anglia	752
Avon	753
Belfast	754
Birmingham	755
Bognor	756
Bournemouth	757
Bristol	758
Cardiff	759
Cardigan Bay	760
Cardigan	761
Cardigan	762
Cardigan	763
Cardigan	764
Cardigan	765
Cardigan	766
Cardigan	767
Cardigan	768
Cardigan	769
Cardigan	770

ABROAD

Region	Forecast
Algeria	771
Algeria	772
Algeria	773
Algeria	774
Algeria	775
Algeria	776
Algeria	777
Algeria	778
Algeria	779
Algeria	780
Algeria	781
Algeria	782
Algeria	783
Algeria	784
Algeria	785
Algeria	786
Algeria	787
Algeria	788
Algeria	789
Algeria	790

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Avon	753
Belfast	754
Birmingham	755
Bognor	756
Bournemouth	757
Bristol	758
Cardiff	759
Cardigan Bay	760
Cardigan	761
Cardigan	762
Cardigan	763
Cardigan	764
Cardigan	765
Cardigan	766
Cardigan	767
Cardigan	768
Cardigan	769
Cardigan	770

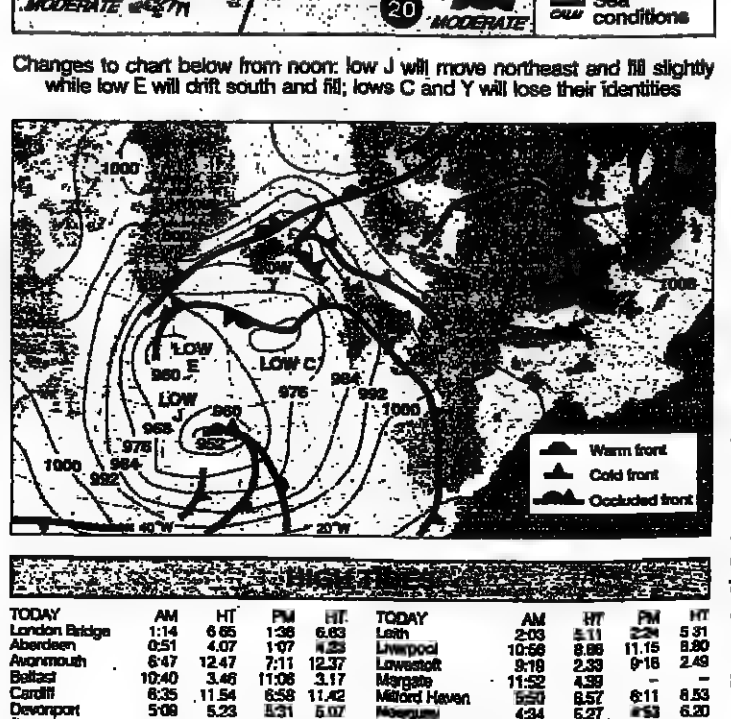
ABROAD

Region	Forecast
Algeria	771
Algeria	772
Algeria	773
Algeria	774
Algeria	775
Algeria	776
Algeria	777
Algeria	778
Algeria	779
Algeria	780
Algeria	781
Algeria	782
Algeria	783
Algeria	784
Algeria	785
Algeria	786
Algeria	787
Algeria	788
Algeria	789
Algeria	790

FORECAST



AROUND BRITAIN



ABROAD

Region	Forecast
Algeria	771
Algeria	772
Algeria	773
Algeria	774
Algeria	775
Algeria	776
Algeria	777
Algeria	778
Algeria	779
Algeria	780
Algeria	781
Algeria	782
Algeria	783
Algeria	784
Algeria	785
Algeria	786
Algeria	787
Algeria	788
Algeria	789
Algeria	790

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George Michael rides to the rescue of British pop

EDUCATION 29

Forcing parents to meet teachers for children's benefit

SPORT 30-36

Raging Bulls on the charge in Chicago

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 34, 35

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY JANUARY 5 1996

I misled Commons over Rom Data, admits Lang



Lang sent a letter

BY ROBERT MILLER
IAN LANG, the President of the Board of Trade, has admitted that he misled the House of Commons in answers to questions about how £850,000 worth of taxpayers' money was poured into a failed West Country computer firm.

Throughout last year, David Jamieson, Labour MP for Plymouth, Devonport, tabled a series of parliamentary questions about grants made by the Department of Trade and Industry to Rom Data Corporation, of Falmouth, when John Dawson, one of the company's directors, had a troubled financial background.

At the outset, ministers assured Mr Jamieson that all the appropriate financial health checks had been made on the directors of Rom Data, which is now the subject of a joint investigation by the Serious Fraud Office and Devon and Cornwall police.

Mr Dawson, who is a former Conservative city councillor in Bath, has a history of bad debts in Britain and the Caribbean. In the early 1980s, Mr Dawson, who is believed to be in Ireland, left the UK before a bankruptcy hearing into the collapse of John Dawson Motor (Holdings) with business and personal debts of nearly £2 million. Another Rom Data

director, Brad Shephard, an American, was declared bankrupt at Truro Crown and County court last October.

Last month, Mr Lang admitted that an internal DTI inquiry had shown that the officials responsible for appraising Rom Data's grant application "were not aware that Mr John Dawson, who was involved with Rom Data Corporation Ltd, was a discharged bankrupt even though that information was held by the Insolvency Service".

In a subsequent letter to John Greenway, the Conservative MP, written on December 21, Mr Lang said that this particular answer "was

intended to set the record straight in respect of earlier answers which had been given earlier this year which were misleading."

"I made it clear that I would report further to the House once the outcome of the Department's own inquiries into other aspects of its handling of the case were known."

The letter continued: "One point I am considering is whether I can throw more light on Mr Dawson's role in the Rom Data Corporation bearing in mind the fact that, as you will be aware, the Serious Fraud Office are also conducting a criminal investigation."

The SFO investigation, codenamed

Operation Gale and led by Detective Inspector Steven Harrison, is understood to have completed questioning a number of former Rom Data employees.

Later this month, detectives are expected to widen their inquiry to overseas jurisdictions including the Caribbean and the US.

Mr Jamieson said last night: "I have now written to the Speaker of the House asking for a full debate at the earliest opportunity on the Rom Data case and the role played by the DTI."

"In particular I want to know why I have been given a series of contradictory answers."

City bankers lambast sacked Exchange chief

BY PATRICIA TEHAN

SOME of the City's most influential figures last night lambasted Michael Lawrence, the departing chief executive of the Stock Exchange, for his failure to win consensus among member firms, and welcomed his swift departure.

With uncharacteristic candour, investment banking heads poured out their dissatisfaction with the way Mr Lawrence has run the Exchange and over the poor relationships that had developed between the Exchange and the Bank of England and Treasury.

In a brief statement, the Exchange said its board had lost confidence in Mr Lawrence, but remained committed to the policies that had been put in place under his leadership. These include

moving ahead with the Sequence project, which is replacing existing information and trading services; carrying the AIM smaller companies market forward; continuing the transition from the current Talisman system to paperless share trading under Crest; and seeking an international role for the Exchange.

Pending the appointment of a new chief executive, John Kemp-Welch, the Exchange chairman, is to lead the executive committee charged with day-to-day management. The suddenness of the departure and the tone of the Exchange's statement demonstrated the bitter feelings that have built up in recent months.

Sir Nicholas Redmayne, joint chief executive of Kleinwort Benson's investment banking operation, said:

"The chairman of the Stock Exchange has our total support. We believe in the long-term plans for the Stock Exchange..." But he added: "The Exchange has to find a way of getting on with its members better than in the past, and with its peer group, particularly the Bank of England and Treasury."

In November, the Exchange was criticised by Pen Kent, an executive director of the Bank of England, who supported calls for it to co-operate with continental European bourses to facilitate the growth of cross-border share dealing.

The appointment of Ian Plenderleith, an executive director of the Bank of England and a member of the Exchange's board, as non-executive deputy chairman of the Exchange, was interpreted in some quarters as a sign that the Bank was in some way behind the changes. But this was denied by the Bank.

Mr Kent's remarks followed an attack earlier in the same month by Rudolf Mueller, the chairman of UBS UK, a division of Union Bank of Switzerland, who accused it of having "missed the boat" to being the central exchange for Europe.

Mr Lawrence had also been criticised by market-makers for his attempts to press ahead with establishing an order-driven quotation system at the Exchange. Market-makers say this would remove liquidity from the system.

But Sir Nicholas said it was "not just the market-making barons" who supported the Exchange's move, it was "the entire membership".

The fiercest criticism of Mr Lawrence came from other investment bankers who preferred not to be named. One said the board was forced to act after "a host of instances" where Mr Lawrence acted in a way that displeased the board or acted without authority.

Another said that Mr Lawrence "was not a particularly easy person to get on with".

Mr Lawrence was on a one-year rolling contract — paid £242,028 the year to March 31 including a £100,000 bonus — and the payment is now a matter of negotiation between his lawyers and those acting for the Exchange.

Lawrence goes, page 1
Pennington, page 21



Acting role: John Kemp-Welch, Exchange chairman, who takes over day-to-day management

Dollar hits two-year high against the yen

BY JANET BUSH

ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE dollar soared to its highest level against the yen for nearly two years in Far Eastern trading and held its gains in Europe, buoyed by hopes of an end to the impasse over the US budget.

In late European trading, the US currency was quoted at ¥106.45, from ¥104.95 late on Wednesday. It also rose to DM1.450 from DM1.4465.

The dollar's move overnight came as Japanese investors, saddled with very low interest rates at home, looked for higher returns overseas. But the new mood of optimism was reinforced by positive noises emanating from officials commenting on the stalemate over the US Budget that has closed down government business for 20 days.

Budget talks between President Clinton and Republican leaders ended with no resolution after three hours on Wednesday night and yesterday's scheduled meeting was postponed at the Republicans' request. However, officials said that should not be read as a sign that talks were breaking down.

Sterling jumped, helped by the rising dollar. It closed at 84.0 on its effective index against a basket of currencies, compared with 83.4 on Wednesday night.

STOCK MARKET

FT-SE 100	3714.1	(-1.5)
FT-SE All shares	3817.55	(+1.59)
Nikkei	20615.00	(+749.85)
New York		
Dow Jones	8206.81	(+15.54)
S&P Composite	621.44	(+0.12)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(7%)
Long Bond	112 1/2	(11 1/2%)
Yield	5.94%	(5.96%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)
12-month bill	110 1/2	(110 1/2)

STERLING

New York	1.5485*	(1.5514)
London	1.5471	(1.5517)
DM	2.2625	(2.2358)
FF	7.6820	(7.6220)
SFR	1.8152	(1.7865)
Yen	104.54	(104.95)
£ index	84.0	(83.4)

US \$ vs DOLLAR

London	1.4502*	(1.4485)
DM	4.9635*	(4.9345)
FF	1.7730*	(1.7650)
Yen	106.54	(106.55)
£ index	84.1	(84.0)

Tokyo close Yen 106.55

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day Mar	\$18.08	(\$18.10)
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GOLD

London close	\$385.25	(\$385.05)
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* denotes midday trading price

Morgan Stanley

Morgan Stanley, the US investment banking group, increased its net income 58 per cent to \$187 million in the fourth quarter of the year. The figure compares with \$118 million in the quarter to October 31, 1994, since Morgan Stanley changed its year end from January to November last year. Page 21

BA record

Strong demand for long-haul traffic helped British Airways to fill a record number of seats on its aircraft for the fifth successive quarter. Passenger traffic in the three months to December 31 increased 8.7 per cent while aircraft were 70 per cent full. Page 20, Tempus 22

Fall of chief ends unpopular reign

BY JON ASHWORTH

MICHAEL LAWRENCE'S abrupt departure from the helm of the Stock Exchange, like that of Peter Rawlings before him, leaves the Exchange's future looking increasingly like a lame duck.

Heidrick & Struggles, the executive headhunter, took eight months to find a successor for Mr Rawlings after the damage inflicted by the Taurus debacle, and the quest for another new face is not going to be any less difficult.

Mr Lawrence, an "outsider" by his own admission, arrived full of missionary zeal when he took up the post in February 1994, after serving as finance director of Prudential Corporation. He spoke of the need to restore the Stock Exchange's reputation, yet several months later was still regarded as a faceless man, with no clear sense of direction. Insiders said that he was even less popular than the notoriously blunt Mr Rawlings, who was fond of telling minions: "I can speak faster than most people can think."

His appointment was seen as one of the most important for years, coming at a time of intense debate over the Stock Exchange's future. Big Bang in 1986 had taken trading off the floor, and the Financial Services Act had stripped away much of its regulatory functions. The failure of the Taurus paperless share settlement system cost City firms up to £500 million, and left the Stock Exchange looking increasingly like a lame duck.

Mr Lawrence's term was not a happy one. The Stock Exchange failed last year in a bid to scupper the launch of Tradepoint, an electronic trading rival. It tried to change the rules to prevent members from signing up, but the move was blocked.

Further humiliation followed when the Exchange tried to prevent the launch of share trading on the Internet, and issued a writ for defamation — which was swiftly withdrawn — against David Jones, chief executive of ShareLink, the Birmingham-based stockbroker.

Mr Lawrence, 52, completed his doctorate in mathematical physics at Bristol University and spent about 18 years with Price Waterhouse. He is a former chairman of the 100 Group of top UK finance directors.

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Clerical Medical rating cut by S&P

BY ROBERT MILLER

CLERICAL Medical, the UK's sixth largest mutual life office with £15 billion under management, has become the second British insurer this week to have its financial strength rating cut by a leading agency.

The Clerical Medical downgrade by Standard & Poor's (S&P), the US corporation, from an AA- to A+ (Good), follows Tuesday's move by S&P when it cut Scottish Provident's financial health rating from AA to A+.

Clerical Medical reacted angrily to the S&P announcement as the rating agency awarded the insurer its AA- rating only last February. The company said it might withdraw from the rating service as it "now finds it difficult to believe in its integrity".

S&P said that the Clerical Medical downgrade reflects the agency's "more pessimistic view of the UK life industry generally, as regulatory and economic pressures continue

to depress sales volumes. S&P believes that sales volumes in the medium term will be insufficient to fully support Clerical Medical's expense base and that this is likely to result in some erosion of capital. Furthermore, capital has proved to be somewhat more volatile than S&P's expectations."

The rating agency noted, however, that the insurer enjoyed a good market position in the UK and overseas and a record of good investment performance.

Robert Walther, group chief executive of Clerical Medical, said: "Issuing this rating such a short time after awarding a higher one is puzzling. We have used the rating given us in good faith. Changing it so quickly leads me to believe that Standard & Poor's is either making a mistake now, or did so in February 1995, no one can tell which. I believe this action will do more damage to their reputation than ours."

Video Arts set for stock market debut

BY ROBERT MILLER

VIDEO ARTS, the successful training company founded in 1972 by John Cleeve and Sir Antony Jay, co-author of *Yes Minister*, is set to be listed on the stock market after being bought by MediaKey, the publishing and media group.

MediaKey said yesterday that as well as purchasing Video Arts, from which Mr Cleeve personally made several million pounds by selling his stake to the management in 1989, it is to buy Marshall Information, the book packager. MediaKey intends to fund the acquisitions by raising £20 million

through a stock market flotation which will capitalise the enlarged group at £30 million.

Video Arts, which last year made an operating profit of £3 million on a turnover of £123 million, retains Mr Cleeve's services through a contract.

The company, which generates 80 per cent of its revenue from its backlist of training videos, has used celebrities such as Dawn French, Robert Lindsay and Hugh Laurie to convey its messages.

Marshall Information is expected to record operating profits of £300,000 on

turnover of about £5.5 million in the year ending December 31, 1995. The company was bought from Harlequin Enterprises in February 1995 by Richard Harman, formerly group managing director of Dorling Kindersley.

Mr Harman, now chief executive of MediaKey, said: "The transactions bring together two highly successful media companies and the placing opens the way to an exciting future in electronic publishing for the group."

The flotation will create the core for a successful electronic publishing venture."



John Cleeve's services are retained

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Deportation of dissident could bring multibillion pound sales for UK

Path cleared for huge Saudi deals

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE Government's decision to deport Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari clears the way for British companies to complete multibillion sales of aircraft and armoured vehicles in Saudi Arabia, Britain's biggest single arms customer.

British Aerospace (BAe) is believed to be close to securing a deal to sell ten Avro RJ85 regional jets to Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) for about £160 million while British

arms manufacturers are bidding to sell up to £3 billion worth of armoured vehicles to the country's national guard.

Vickers, which is hoping to sell Saudi Arabia 230 Challenger 2 tanks, earning the company up to £1 billion, said it had expressed concern when approached by the Government for its views on the problems.

Dr al-Mas'ari's presence in Britain created Officials at BAe have also privately expressed concern about the effect Saudi dissi-

dents based in London have been having on their business prospects.

Saudi Arabia is a crucial customer for BAe, which already supplies it with Tornado fighter-bombers and maintenance support for its air force.

A decision from Saudi on the regional jet tender is expected shortly.

Apart from BAe subsidiary Avro, other companies bidding to supply regional aircraft are understood to be Saab, Canadair and Fokker.

BAe took orders for 50 regional jets last year from Cross Air, part of Swiss Air, Air Malta, Lufthansa and Sabena. Production is 18 per year but could be stepped up if demand justified it.

Demand for long-haul seats helps BA to record

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

STRONG demand for long-haul traffic helped British Airways to fill a record number of seats on its aircraft for the fifth successive quarter.

Passenger traffic in the three months to December 31 increased 8.7 per cent while aircraft, on average, were 70.6 per cent full—a record level.

BA's routes to New York and Paris remained the most popular: club and first class passengers grew 8 per cent;

and economy traffic 9 per cent. The figures follow a summer in which BA passenger levels were up 7 per cent to 8.3 million and pre-tax profit soared to £135 million in the three months to June 30.

Shares rose yesterday to 484½, their highest since February 1994, after UBS increased its estimate for the airline's pre-tax profit by £10 million to £580 million for the year ending in March. UBS raised the stock to a "buy" from a "hold" and ABN Amro Hoare Govett repeated a "buy" recommendation.

Peter Burgess, of Hoare Govett, said BA shares had been held back by fears of rising oil prices, a fare price war in the United States and the commitment to USAir but had been overplayed.

Oil prices were expected to drift lower; it was no surprise that the US air industry had been cutting prices in what traditionally was a lean time of the year; and he did not expect BA to increase its investment in USAir—in which it holds a 21 per cent stake and 24.6 per cent of the equity—until it had reached agreement on cutting costs.

BA also launched a £100 million worldwide advertising campaign yesterday, the first pursued for the airline by the new Saatchi company.

Tempus, page 22

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.18	2.02
Austria Sch	16.78	15.29
Belgium F	46.11	44.81
Canada C	2.21	2.06
Cyprus Cyp	0.75	0.68
Denmark K	8.30	8.50
Finland M	7.51	8.66
France F	6.45	6.08
Germany Dm	2.40	2.19
Greece Dr	350.00	365.00
Hong Kong S	12.64	11.64
Ireland P	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.2500	4.8000
Italy L	255.00	239.00
Japan Yen	177.80	161.80
Malta	0.65	0.537
Netherlands Gld	2.65	2.435
New Zealand \$	2.51	2.29
Norway Kr	10.47	9.67
Portugal Esc	244.50	226.00
S Africa R	16.50	15.50
Spain Ptas	165.00	155.00
Sweden Kr	10.50	10.10
Switzerland Fr	1.34	1.26
Turkey Lira	87.40	87.60
USA \$	1.849	1.719

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates at close of trading yesterday.



Women workers in kimonos lead the ceremony to open 1996 trading on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. The Nikkei rose 749.85 to 20,618, its highest close since September 1994

Small firms forecast to resume expansion

By PATRICIA TEHAN

BANKING CORRESPONDENT

SMALL businesses have been forecast to resume expansion this year after a decade of standing still.

An optimistic forecast from Dennis Turner, Midland Bank's head of business economics, predicts that, after the Chancellor's upbeat forecast for continuing economic growth in 1996 and because of a need to expand productivity capacity, small firms will be in a position to turn their attention to investment opportunities.

He said: "Despite the recovery, and the sharply higher profits it has brought, small businesses have been reluctant to invest in the future, preferring to pay off debts to banks and building societies."

Mr Turner said that economic recovery has let small businesses cut debts and build up assets. They had become liquid again "and will start to look for investment opportunities to enable them to expand".

New plant to boost British Steel output

BRITISH STEEL is poised to increase its output of steel for cars by making a million tonnes a year after what it claims to be the fastest building of a particular cast plant by any steelmaker. The company—which was smoothed by European Court an EU move, whose way was smoothed by the British Government, to sanction subsidies to Irish Steel—has started hot commissioning of the cast plant, at Llanwern just over a year after starting to build it. Equipment from the defunct Ravenscraig steelworks helped to cut the cost of the development, which is to be followed by a fresh blast-furnace. Overall the work cost about £22 million.

The new cast removes a big capacity constraint at Llanwern. It will allow British Steel to lift production there to three million tonnes a year, to be made on a flexible basis to cope with changing demands in the automotive market. Separately, British Steel said that it has no plans to match a 3 per cent price rise by a US competitor.

BMW pulls ahead

BMW, the German car company that owns Rover, increased its sales by 3 per cent in 1995, while sales of Rovers grew 2 per cent thanks to strong growth in worldwide sales of Land Rovers. BMW sales in 1995 totalled 574,000, while Rover sales were 358,000. BMW's motorcycle division performed well, with sales up 7 per cent to 127,000, offsetting an otherwise disappointing year for Rover, which saw sales decline in both the UK and Europe. Its market share slipped below 10 per cent in the UK for the first time.

Brent sells again

BRENT INTERNATIONAL, the chemicals company, has continued its programme of simplifying and focusing its business with the sale of non-core businesses and surplus property assets for £7.5 million. Brent has sold its Asian industrial chemicals business, its remaining interests in aerospace equipment sales and its freehold interests in Paris and Ghent. It has also entered into a sale-and-leaseback agreement on a property in Münchenladbach, Germany. The net proceeds of £4.5 million will be used to reduce borrowings. The shares rose 12p to 84p.

No Merrydown swap

MERRYDOWN, the cider maker, announced yesterday that it is not planning a share exchange with Two Dogs International, the Australian alcoholic lemonade company. Merrydown, which is the licensed manufacturer and distributor of Two Dogs for the United Kingdom and Europe said that it had "no present intention" of entering into any such agreement. Richard Purdy, the chairman, said: "We will naturally keep the question of possible closer involvement with Two Dogs under continual review."

Blue Bird purchase

BLUE BIRD, the confectionery company famed for its toffee with the hammer, has bought Needlers from Nidar of Norway as part of its European expansion programme. Blue Bird, now part of the Singaporean Jack Chia-MPH Group, last year celebrated its centenary by returning to profitability for the first time in 15 years. In 1995 it also bought the French companies Kesteloot and Société Européenne de Confiterie as part of the group's plan to lift its European retail sales to £75 million. Blue Bird now operates ten confectionery companies in seven countries and plans further acquisitions.

PIA expels member

THE Personal Investment Authority, watchdog for firms that sell direct to the public, has expelled one member and rejected the application for membership of another. M.J. Planning, of Salford, Bristol, had its authorisation to conduct investment business withdrawn after the sole trader, Michael Giblin, was declared bankrupt. Saxon Investments, of Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, has had its application to join the PIA rejected after failing, despite reminders, to provide information requested by the regulator. The PIA has rejected or expelled a total of 20 firms.

Shimizu invests in Wales

SHIMIZU, the Japanese company that manufactures plastic products for the automotive and domestic electronic appliance markets, yesterday announced a £5 million investment in Newtown, Mid Wales. The announcement marks the first direct Japanese investment in rural Wales and it will result in the creation of 45 jobs. The company will begin production later this month. Shimizu's main customer is Nippon Denso, of Telford, an automotive component manufacturer, which now owns 20 per cent of Shimizu's shares.

'Inadequate' power plans criticised

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

FRESH fears were yesterday added to the concern over the electricity industry's preparation for open competition when customers will be able to buy power from whoever they choose.

After worries voiced by ministers and consumer groups, an energy consultancy condemned the plans, to be implemented in 1998, as inadequate and potentially a poll tax on wires.

The criticism comes from the EEE Group, which has advised on power industry restructuring in the US and which is headed by Alex Henney, a former electricity consumer adviser in the UK. The report said: "With many sectors of the industry dissenting from the proposals, and

with Offer failing to define who is going to pay for the costs, further slippage is inevitable." It added that the development costs over four years would amount to £6 per customer if the costs were fed back to the electricity companies.

The electricity pool, which is responsible for pricing and settling transaction costs for power, has voiced its own fears that the industry is not gearing up sufficiently with the technology and other requirements to begin the market.

Offer said that the EEE report provided "an interesting contribution to the debate" although it agreed that it shared some of the concerns over costs.

Ford targets Indian car market

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

FORD is linking with Mahindra & Mahindra, the Indian manufacturer, to establish a Ford Fiesta factory in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Ford plans to invest \$800 million. Its largest investment in the sub-continent to date. The new factory will be based outside Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu. The annual production target is 100,000 and the first Fiesta is expected to roll off the production line in 1998.

A smaller plant is also being built in Madras to assemble Ford Escorts from kits, and should be open by the end of the year. Ford has been attracted to southern India by the proximity of India's major auto-components manufacturers.

Ford is confident that the Fiesta will make the transition from Dagenham to Delhi and will find favour with India's rapidly expanding middle class. There has been an explosion in consumer credit in the last few years, with car loans readily available from banks as the middle class has taken advantage of economic reforms. India is now ranked as the world's sixth-largest country in terms of consumer purchasing power.

Foreign carmakers are racing into India and car output has doubled in just three years to around 300,000 vehicles a year. Production is expected to grow to around one million by the end of the century. Honda of Japan, Daewoo of Korea and Peugeot of France already have factories, with Chrysler, America's biggest carmaker, looking to make an entry this year.

But car ownership still remains relatively small for a country with an estimated population of one billion. Bicycles and motor scooters still vastly outnumber cars. There are around 24 million scooters, compared with just 3.5 million cars. Ford and its rivals believe all that could soon change.

Incheape sells colony HQ

By ROSS TIEMAN

INCHCAPE, the debt-laden international car distribution and services group, has sold the headquarters of Crown Motors, its Hong Kong subsidiary, to raise £56.3 million. The cash will be used to relocate that part of the business, and cut borrowings.

The sale, which follows the appointment of Sir Colin Mar-

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LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

THE RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES COURT (IN ENGLAND AND WALES)

In the Matter of the RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES ACT 1976 and in the Matter of BOOKS AND RELATED CLASSES OF GOODS and in the Matter of the RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES ACT 1976 and in the Matter of THIS NEW BOOK AGREEMENT 1997

Notice is hereby given that on 12 December 1995 there was issued out of the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) by the Registrar of the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) a Notice of Application for an order discharging the Order made by the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) on 12 December 1995 in proceedings No. 1995/178, which directed that the following classes of goods shall be exempt from the provisions of the Restrictive Practices Act 1976.

- (1) Printed books, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets, all within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System (Class 49.03 commonly known as and described as "Books, Brochures, Pamphlets and Leaflets") (hereinafter referred to as "Books")
- (2) Children's picture books, other than picture or drawing books, within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System
- (3) Maps (including atlases, wall maps and topographical plans) within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System

Notice is hereby given that on 12 December 1995 there was also issued out of the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) a Notice of Application for an order discharging the Order made by the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) on 12 December 1995 in proceedings No. 1995/178, which directed that the following classes of goods shall be exempt from the provisions of the Restrictive Practices Act 1976.

- (1) Printed books, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets, all within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System (Class 49.03 commonly known as and described as "Books, Brochures, Pamphlets and Leaflets") (hereinafter referred to as "Books")
- (2) Children's picture books, other than picture or drawing books, within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System
- (3) Maps (including atlases, wall maps and topographical plans) within heading 49.03 of the Harmonized System

NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF THE ESTATE OF THE LATE MR. JOHN HENRY RICHARDS

THE ESTATE OF THE LATE MR. JOHN HENRY RICHARDS, who died on 12 December 1995, is being administered by the Executors, Messrs. J. H. Richards & Co., Solicitors, of 1, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF.

Notice is hereby given that the Executors have received from the Probate Registry a copy of the Will of the late Mr. John Henry Richards, which is now being administered by the Executors.

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1071-782 7344

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

THE RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES COURT (IN ENGLAND AND WALES)

In the Matter of the RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES ACT 1976 and in the Matter of BOOKS AND RELATED CLASSES OF GOODS and in the Matter of the RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES ACT 1976 and in the Matter of THIS NEW BOOK AGREEMENT 1997

Notice is hereby given that on 12 December 1995 there was issued out of the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) by the Registrar of the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) a Notice of Application for an order discharging the Order made by the Restrictive Practices Court (in England and Wales) on 12 December 1995 in proceedings No. 1995/178, which directed that the following classes of goods shall be exempt from the provisions of the Restrictive Practices Act 1976.

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□ Last orders for Exchange chief □ Bringing competition into the power business □ Weighing up the options over Forte

Merry Christmas, Mr Lawrence

□ THERE was something chillingly brutal about the dismissal of Michael Lawrence yesterday. None of the usual "seeking other business opportunities", no attempt to deny a rift or gild the curriculum vitae for the benefit of future employers.

No, he was shot "with immediate effect" because the rest of the board did not want him around any more. This is the way you treat the servant classes. Mr Lawrence was the grammar school old turned insurance salesman brought in from outside to clear up the mess the last outsider left when he too was shown the door.

He was not part of the City club, unlike the grantees that appointed him, and so was not entitled to the normal courtesies they would expect. Mr Lawrence, most avow, could be difficult, and he did not always carry his colleagues with him. But the danger in firing any chief executive under such circumstances is that it does rather detract from those measures they were brought in by the rest of the board to put into effect, thus tarring all concerned with the same brush.

The trick is to imply that the bust-up was purely personal. So the City newswires were buzzing last night with those ever-useful

"sources close to the LSE board" saying the dispute "was more about personalities than policies". Meanwhile there would be no change to stated policy.

When news of the sacking broke, observers wondered just what had been the breaking point in the relationship between Mr Lawrence and the Exchange. The most obvious goal was the spat with Sharelink that threatened to make the Exchange a laughing stock.

But more damaging has been the behind-the-scenes warfare over the switch from today's quote-driven system of trading, whereby market-makers display the price at which they will buy and sell stock to all and sundry, to an order-driven system. Under the latter, the two sides to a matched bargain conduct it electronically, and the price at which they deal moves the indicated share price.

This is the way New York and continental bourses work, and the American houses trading in the City since Big Bang have

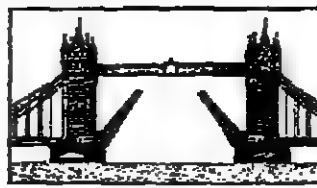
long wanted it here. It is anathema to the traditional market-makers because it wipes out their role. The Exchange said at the end of November it would be progressing towards an order-driven system, prompting disaffection among the old guard and some cynicism as to the pace of that progress.

The next few months will see whether that cynicism was justified. Will it be, as the Exchange chairman says, vigorous strides towards "full electronic trading and order matching"? Or will the grantees echo St Augustine: "Oh Lord, give me order-driven trading — but not yet."

A whimper rather than a big bang

□ WHEN your throat is about to be cut, you do not rush to help to sharpen the knife. Little wonder, then, that the electricity industry is not falling over itself to speed the progress towards open competition in 1998.

PENNINGTON



Only small steps have been taken towards what has been dressed up as a big bang in energy, when the whole of the domestic market will be up for grabs and customers can buy their power from anyone.

Now even Stephen Littlechild, whose job it is to ensure the whole thing happens, has uneasily shuffled his feet and suggested the industry might please — if it can see its way clear — get a move on.

He is anxious to avoid the fiasco of 1994, when the electricity market for large users was opened up to competition in a wholly unprepared fashion, and

the industry stumbled out of bed one day into a whole new world of administrative problems, disrupted power charges and technological inadequacies.

He was criticised then for entering the debate far too late in the day, and he has not learnt. The matter of who will pay for implementing the mechanics of competition has not been settled, even though the bill, estimated at more than £300 million, was supposed to have been assigned by the end of the year. The electricity companies are keen it should not fall to them. Why should their shareholders pay to help other companies to take their business?

The competition in energy is being forced in a way that never happened with telecommunications. Nobody asked BT shareholders to help Mercury on line. If 1998 is going to function well, or indeed happen at all, Professor Littlechild must either find the money from Tim Eggars's pocket or implement a new electricity licence that de-

mand the companies begin making progress, rather than merely asking them politely to hasten their commercial eclipse.

Granada needs to cast a new spell

□ GERRY ROBINSON may reflect that life is unfair as he mulls over a higher Granada bid for Forte this weekend. Forte's defence has been so drastic that a slimmed down company would have more margin for error than a stretched Granada-cum-Forte. The City, including many institutions with shares in both, seems to prefer the version produced by long-term laggard Forte to that dreamt up by fast-moving winner Granada.

The institutions are now much taken with the option, suggested in this column, of Mr Robinson buying only the catering businesses he knows. Instead he claims blithely that international hotels, like television, require no special expertise and that simple

universal management techniques to cut costs and raise prices will widen margins.

Granada can still step back and aim instead to top the conditional sale of Forte's roadside restaurants and motorway stops to Whitbread. Any such offer is not certain to succeed. Contracts allow Whitbread to share any premium and Granada cannot add Forte's motorway business to its own.

The odds are still on pride requiring a higher bid. But if Mr Robinson really believes that no industry is unique and that his team can weave magic with margins, he could think laterally and buy top contractor Amec's £2 billion-a-year turnover for little more than petty cash.

Common currency

□ AFTER claims that the majority of businessmen think a common Euro-currency a ripping wheeze, the latest dispatch from the surveys front suggests that, indeed, most of the actual public both understand and support the European Union and EMU, partial or not. Where do they find such surveys? In this case, on the pay-roll of something called the European Movement. Which explains a lot.

Morgan Stanley increases its income to \$187m

BY PATRICIA THOMAS AND JON ASHWORTH

MORGAN Stanley, the US investment banking giant, increased its net income 58 per cent to \$187 million in the fourth quarter of the year.

The figure compares with \$118 million in the quarter to end-October 1994, since Morgan Stanley changed its year-end from January to November last year.

Net income for the ten-month fiscal year to November 30 was \$600 million, or \$6.96 per common share. Net revenues for the period were \$3.6 billion and fully diluted earnings per share were \$6.65. Richard Fisher, chairman, said that the strong results followed "a difficult period in 1994". He said investment banking revenue increased thanks to "buoyant mergers and acquisitions markets around the world" and a strong year for underwriting, particularly equity issues.

He said: "We remain committed to our long-term strategy of expanding and enhancing our presence around the world."

Morgan Stanley yesterday sought to distance itself from court action in Luxembourg stemming from the collapse of



Lee, investigating

a \$120 million offshore fund. A group of investors is suing the bank for alleged gross negligence over valuations provided for The Global Opportunity Fund, to which Morgan Stanley Banque Luxembourg was administrator and custodian.

The fund was managed in London by a firm called InterCapital Asset Management and domiciled in the Cayman Islands. Morgan Stanley in London provided loans to allow investors to gear up their holdings, and made a market in Italian warrants held by fund. Court proceedings were initiated in December after settlement discussions broke down. The timetable for the case will be spelt out in Luxembourg today. The lawsuit alleges negligence by Morgan Stanley relating principally to the overvaluation of the fund, which collapsed in February 1995 after a series of redemptions by investors.

Rakisons, the London-based law firm, and Bonn & Schmitt, a Luxembourg firm, are acting on behalf of investors, who allege losses of up to \$70 million.

Lee & Allen, a London forensic accounting firm, has been retained to investigate alleged irregularities in the fund.

□ Lehman Brothers, the US financial institution, increased its net income by 50 per cent to \$69 million in the fourth quarter to November after a \$38 million charge for occupancy-related property expenses and severance payments.

The charge was partly offset by a gain of \$47 million on the sale of Lehman's stake in Omnitel Sistemi Radiocellulari Italiani. For the year to November, net income more than doubled from \$113 million to \$242 million on total revenues of \$3.1 billion, up from \$2.7 billion.

Retailer closer to relisting

BY SARAH BAGNALL

ATTEMPTS to rescue Owen & Robinson, the sportswear retailer, took a step forward yesterday when it emerged that a former chairman had paid £5.5 million for a large chunk of the company's debt and shares.

The move clears the way for the company's shares to be relisted after a five-month suspension and ends the company's short-lived involvement

with Philip Green, the flamboyant former head of Amber Day, the discount clothing chain renamed WEW.

Morris Dwek, a former chairman, succeeded in raising funds to acquire the debt and a 16 per cent equity stake in the company from Mr Green.

Mr Green acquired £6 million of the company's debt at a discount from TSB last July. At the same time, he acquired the shares. He is thought to have made a small profit on the deal.

SelectTV decision next week

BY ERIC REGULY

PEARSON, the media group that owns the Financial Times and Penguin books, will decide next week whether to bid for SelectTV, the television company that made *Lovejoy* and *Birds of a Feather*. A decision to proceed with the £45 million deal is said to hinge on whether it can line up buyers for the parts of SelectTV it does not want.

Pearson wants SelectTV's library and

production arm, but not its cable channel or its 15 per cent interest in Meridian Broadcasting.

MAI, the ITV company that already owns 61 per cent of Meridian, is the logical buyer for the stake. Carlton Broadcasting, owner of the London weekday franchise, has been in talks with Pearson to buy SelectTV's cable channel, but is unlikely to commit itself unless it can find a distribution outlet for the channel.



Pretty soon, you won't need an advertisement to tell you who United Utilities are.

It is our aim to represent, on an international stage, the best in British industry.

Who are we?

You probably remember that last November North West Water PLC acquired Norweb PLC.

Shortly those names will cease to exist on the Stock Exchange.

On the 1st January 1996 an exciting new name appeared.

United Utilities.

It is the UK's first multi-utility company. Comprised of water, electricity, gas and telecommunications.

If a company of this stature was launched in America there would be a ticker-tape parade.

Today, the world.

Internationally the opportunities are very exciting indeed. United Utilities already has the strength and expertise to compete globally.

In the USA we have forged a strategic alliance with Bechtel, one of the world's largest construction companies.

This partnership, which allows us to bid for and win worldwide contracts, is called International Water.

World Bank figures confirm that internationally there are business opportunities for utility companies worth more than \$600 Billion.

Take water for example.

Only 2% of the world's water water benefits from any kind of treatment.

And only 30% of the world's population has the luxury of drinking water from a tap.

Wouldn't you like a British company to compete for that business?

Strength and depth.

North West Water is the third biggest water company in the world.

Serving 7 million people in the UK and perhaps more surprisingly, we have contracts to serve 21 million more worldwide.

It is rated by OFWAT as the nation's most efficient water company.

With the biggest environmental improvement

UNITED UTILITIES PLC. DAWSON HOUSE, GREAT SANKEY, WARRINGTON, WA5 3LW.

programme and the third lowest water charges.

Norweb on the other hand is the lowest cost provider of electricity in the UK.

Its electrical retailing arm has embraced the whole country. It is now the third biggest.

And it might surprise you to learn that it is also a telecommunications company and a provider of gas, supplying 3000 industrial sites throughout the UK.

A perfect marriage.

With North West Water and Norweb there was true synergy. Two utilities companies in the same geographical area.

While as individual businesses they were certainly successful, together, as one force they will be unbeatable.

Of course, between them, North West Water and Norweb have a good deal of heritage.

Which is why both will continue to trade under these names.

Everyone benefits.

The company as a whole will bring together common services to provide greater efficiency.

Which, for 7 million people in the UK, will mean a higher standard of service and a progressive reduction in water and electricity costs.

We'll also be continuing with the ground breaking rebate scheme pioneered by North West Water.

The savings made from the greater efficiency of the company are shared with customers and shareholders.

And, for our shareholders, we are committed to providing a healthy return on their investment.

A bright future.

Bringing together North West Water and Norweb to form one bigger and stronger utilities company will benefit our customers.

It will benefit our shareholders.

It will benefit our employees.

And as a British company, competing and winning on the world stage, it will benefit the economy too.

We're ready to take on the world.

YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME AN INSTANT MILLIONAIRE



10,000 Lottery tickets to be won

First prize in the Lottery could now be as much as £40 million and The Times has entered 10,000 tickets in Saturday's draw for readers to win, for an even better chance of hitting the jackpot. Our prizes will be allocated like this:

One first prize of 5,000 £1 tickets

Five runners-up prizes of 1,000 £1 tickets

The Times will hold the randomly generated numbers on computer which will work out if any are winners. If they are, the readers who won Times tickets will be contacted. Every day we are publishing a competition question and you can enter as many times as you wish. Today's question is:

How many times can the Lottery jackpot roll over?

a) three times b) six times c) an unlimited number

Phone your answer daily on the number below, open 24 hours, and until 3pm on Saturday. All correct answers to this week's questions go into the draw and winners will be randomly selected. Normal Times Newspapers rules apply. Names of last week's winners will appear on Saturday.

PHONE YOUR ANSWER ON: 0801 40 50 49

Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p per minute at all other times

Halifax set to expand insurance

Halifax, the UK's largest building society, confirmed yesterday it is prepared to buy a mutual insurance company to enhance its own Halifax Life, launched a year ago.

A spokesman said: "We know there are a number of opportunities in the market-place and have looked at some of them. If we do buy anything it will have to be at the right price and fit in with our existing business strategy."

BR signals sale

British Rail has completed the sale of its second signalling and contracting business, Interlogic Control Engineering, to ABB Dainler-Benz Transportation, which rivals GEC-Alsthon as one of Europe's largest rail-equipment businesses. Interlogic employs a total of 420.

Druck ahead

A strong order book, fuelled by a rise in exports, helped pre-tax profits at Druck Holdings, which makes electronic pressure sensors and transducers, to jump 69 per cent to £4.4 million in the six months to September 30. Sales advanced 34 per cent to £22.7 million. The interim dividend is raised to 5p (4.1p), payable on February 19, from earnings per share of 43.1p (26.1p).

Mirror deal

A compensation deal has been struck between Mirror Group Newspapers and Nightingale, a distribution service that handled The Independent before Mirror Group bought 43 per cent of the newspaper in 1994. Payment details were not disclosed.

مركز من المال

1. The first step in the process is to identify the problem or issue that needs to be addressed. This involves gathering information and understanding the context of the problem.

EMPUS
a little higher

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARY

Could this
be for YOU?

IF YOU'RE determined it's going to be YOU who is going to win tomorrow's National Lottery jackpot, then a new savings account from the Newcastle Building Society, offering an interest rate of 6.9 per cent, could appeal.

Gracious loser

ALGY CLUFF yesterday proved just what an officer and a gentleman he is. The takeover of his Kuff Resources mining group was declared unconditional in the morning by bidder Ashanti Goldfields, and by noon Cluff had penned a letter to Ashanti's chief executive Sam Jonah to congratulate him. Algy will be under contract to Cluff's new owners for at least a year. However if, in time, Algy spurns Cluff Two and starts all over again, 1, for one, would not be surprised.

Lloyd's or Lloyds

IT SEEMS that both Lloyd's of London and the clearing banks need to give some lessons to the Labour Party. In discussing the Education (Student Loans) Bill, Maria Pye, Labour MP for Glasgow, Maryhill, asked the committee chairman if three Conservative MPs, apparently members of Lloyd's, should declare an interest "because their bank may possibly be involved". Nicholas Baker, MP for North Dorset, put Mrs Pye right. "The hon lady talks about her ignorance. I assure her that Lloyd's is the underwriter of the same as Lloyds Bank."



"The water compensation has arrived"

Gilt warning

IMRO, as part of its brief to ensure investors are fully aware of what they are investing in, yesterday issued a new set of disclosure requirements governing unit trusts and the like. Paragraph 34 of the document starkly illustrates how times have changed. This requires that specific mention be made if more than 35 per cent of the portfolio consists, or is likely to consist, of gilt. The new unit regulation is detailed under the heading "Risk Warnings".

Bigger splash

YOU won't find Thames Water chiefs out there with a bucket and mop in hand helping to end the misery of burst water pipes. Instead, they are getting on with their business — in England and in India. Thames came through the summer without any water restrictions, and if there are any current weather problems then they are modest. That leaves Thames time to lend a hand to India where water problems can be a health problem. Thames told the Westminster Review: "We have already started work in Bombay on a project which should double the supply of water there, and we are hopeful of winning a lot more contracts."

COLIN CAMPBELL

Companies that hanker after a lord on the board

Frank Ledue
on why peers
have become
a valuable
business asset

Peers have never been in greater demand to lend the boardroom a little bit of class and nowhere more so than in banks and transport companies.

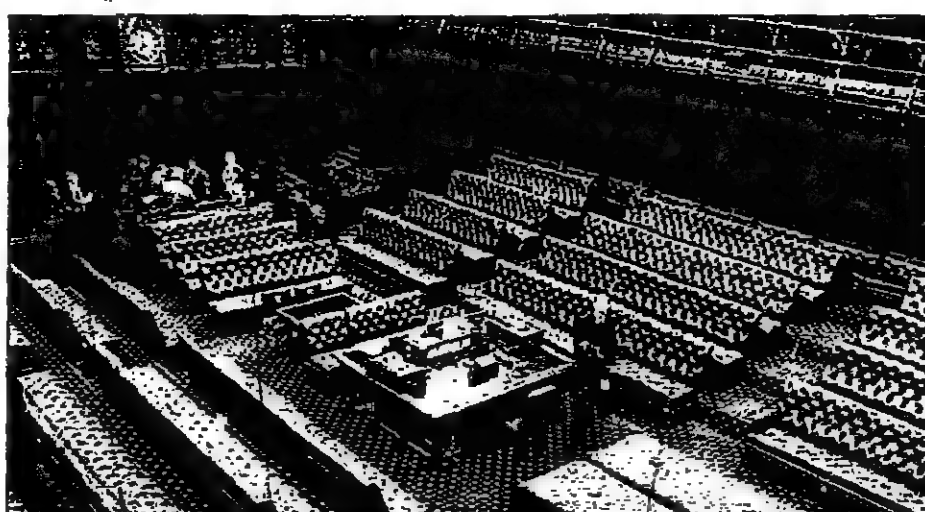
A survey of Britain's 250 largest listed companies, for The Times by Pensions Investment Research Consultants (PIRC) found that 134 peers were directors of 88 companies. Remarkable, given that there are fewer than 1,200 peers. The pool of available boardroom talent reduces considerably if the archbishops and bishops are excluded, together with members of the Government, spokesmen for the Opposition, law lords and those who have already retired from the business world.

Many of the companies who appoint lords are world leaders so it is puzzling that they appear to hanker for a bygone age. Anne Simpson, joint managing director of PIRC, said: "It may well give added gravitas to the board, but gravitas does not equal competence. The tradition of appointing those who will grace the headed notepaper isn't necessarily something our competitors would understand. Boards aren't mantelpieces to display decorative objects. The directors should all be there through merit, hard work and ability."

The status of a duke or viscount is seen by some companies as an asset when trying to win foreign contracts, or if potential clients include social climbers or the easily awed. Those businesses dependent on government contracts may like to have someone on their side who is well-versed in the ways of Whitehall and Westminster, and who has useful contacts — in many cases former ministers or civil servants.

Ms Simpson said that while some peers were successful businessmen who had been ennobled in recognition of their achievements, others were appointed by companies "in the hope that this is going to give them some additional away with the Government". The PIRC survey found that two sectors, banking and transport, which are closely affected by government policies, had a particularly high proportion of lords on the board.

Sceptics say that the bestowal of a peerage on a chairman or chief executive sometimes follows donations to a political party. The coincidence (in statistical terms) of honours and political donations was highlighted in an Investors Chronicle report last summer. Patrick Toohy, the author, said: "Between 1979 and 1982,



The House of Lords has turned into a valuable recruiting ground for British companies



Lord Hanson, left, a successful life peer, and Viscount Blakenham who inherited his title



The Duke of Westminster, left, a City director, and Lord Ashburton, a former chairman of BP

only 6 per cent of all public companies gave to the Conservative cause, yet half the peers created in these three years were directors of these few companies.

One thing that can be said about the seventh Earl of Anywhere or the fifth Lord Nobody is that, by succeeding to their titles, there can be no suspicion that they obtained them in anything other than honourable circumstances.

Equally, faulting the educational background of such peers would be hard. The majority of the 770 hereditary peers had highly expensive educations with Eton predominating. And the majority went on to Oxford or Cambridge. Only from among the ranks of Britain's 400 life peers is one likely to find a lord who went to a state school or a redbrick university. And even among life peers, a significant num-

ber are ex-public school or Oxbridge graduates or both. But not Lord Shepperton of Didgmore. Typical of the self-made man, he rose from humble origins in the East End of London to become chairman of Grand Metropolitan, the international food and drinks group.

Lord Blakenham's background was hardly one of grinding poverty. He started out running a family transport business before establishing one of the biggest deal-making conglomerates of the 20th century.

Viscount Blakenham, chairman of Pearson, the media and entertainment group that owns the Financial Times and Penguin Books, inherited his title. He is a member of the Pearson family that founded the business and still has a stake. He once said: "I have never thought of myself as an aristocrat. My father was a

politician who was made a peer." This gentle, understatement ignores the fact that his paternal grandfather was the fourth Earl of Listowel. His maternal grandfather was the second Lord Cowdray — the Pearson connection. And one of his great-grandfathers was the second Lord Derwent.

Lord Blakenham has also said: "I like to think I would be running something else if it were not for the family connection." Educated at Eton and Harvard, and with a career that has not been confined to the family firm, his view is probably accurate. It seems unlikely that one could command a seat at the top table of one of Britain's biggest companies — and for so long — without a certain degree of ability.

Viscount Blakenham is not the only director of a newspaper publishing company to have ink mingled with the blue blood coursing through his veins. Others include Viscount Rothermere, chairman of the Daily Mail and General Trust, and Lord Hartwell, who stepped down this week at The Telegraph.

The Baring family did more than furnish the boardroom of Baring Brothers, Britain's oldest bank, which was rescued by ING, the Dutch company, after Nick Leeson brought it down. Directors among the present generation of five lords with the surname Baring include: Lord Cromer (Inchcape); Lord Howick of Glendale (Northern Rock Building Society); and Lord Ashburton, who retired as chairman of BP last year.

Two chairmen of J Sainsbury since 1956, who served 34 years between them, were Lord Sainsbury and his son Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover.

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Two chairmen of J Sainsbury since 1956, who served 34 years between them, were Lord Sainsbury and his son Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover.

The majority of hereditary peers who run a business, however, control a private holding company with the aim of earning a decent return on the family's assets. The Duke of Westminster, for example, a director of Sun Alliance and one of Britain's wealthiest people is also a director of Grosvenor Estate Holdings, which runs his London property interests.

A relatively new strand of boardroom lord is the retired politician. An increasing number are taking up lucrative posts in the City after retiring from ministerial office. Many of them preached from the gospel of free enterprise during the Eighties, although few, if any, of their appointments to company boards followed an open, visible and competitive selection process.

Does it matter? Ms Simpson is quick to point out that the quality of those who run companies is significant for UK plc and for those they employ in increasingly competitive and global markets.

Ms Simpson believes that companies should introduce nomination committees instead of "quaint medieval appointments". She said: "What we want to see is a transparent approach. That shouldn't exclude the embroiled, offspring, relatives or friends, but they should have to compete with everyone else."

"The issue really is Britain having to operate in an extremely competitive international environment. Where are the brightest and best going to come from? The House of Lords is not necessarily the first port of call."

Take cover to fight those hostile bids

Insurance can help to ease the cost of a takeover battle, Sarah Bagnall finds

As corporate Britain braces itself for another year of frenzied bid battles, potential targets may want to consider insuring themselves against the cost of defending an unwelcome approach. Last year more than £70 billion worth of takeovers and mergers were completed and all the indications point towards an equally busy 1996.

Fighting off a bid is not cheap. The cost of the necessary array of merchant bankers, lawyers, accountants and public relations experts can run into tens of millions of pounds — a bill that his earnings per share and can seriously deplete a company's cash resources.

As soon as a bidder has swooped on his prey, the victim collects advisers, which can include management consultants, such as Boston Consulting, and defensive agencies, such as Kroil Associates. The rule of thumb used by the City to calculate the average cost of a company's defence is 0.8 per cent of the value of the bid.

For smaller companies, with market values of up to £100 million, the percentage rises to 1.5 to 2 per cent. Apply this formula to Granada's £32 billion hostile bid for Fortis and the latter's defence could cost £25.6 million, while Amec's successful defence against a £360 million bid from Kvaerner could have cost about £29 million. Acquisitions Monthly estimates that last year's deals netted nearly £1 billion worth of fees for external advisers.

Imagine then that these defence costs could be recovered if the advances of an unwelcome suitor were successfully thwarted. Well, they can. TOI Corporate Services, an arm of Swire Fraser, the Lloyd's broker, offers takeover insurance to cover defence costs.

Sandra Ringseil, a former corporate financier who set up TOI in 1990, says: "At the moment, we are covering about 100 companies — about 3 per cent of the

companies on the Stock Exchange."

The cover costs between 3.5 and 6 per cent of the sum assured, depending on the target's perceived risk of a takeover bid and its ability to successfully defend itself. As a result, if a company spent £1,750 it could recoup costs of up to £50,000 and a premium of £70,000 could lead to the recovery of fees of up to £2 million.

The cover lasts 15 months, but if a bid is made in the first three months no claim can be made. Miss Ringseil believes the investment is worth making. "Besides incurring substantial professional fees, a bid can have a detrimental impact on a company's cash flow, its borrowing capabilities and its earnings per share." Furthermore, companies financially weakened by a hostile bid are more vulnerable to a second onslaught. The earnings impact is a result of the accounting standard FRSS, which since June 1993, has required companies to deduct defence costs from pre-tax profits.

The odds of being the subject of a takeover bid are surprisingly short. Last year, TOI estimated that in the years 1990 to 1994 a quoted company had a one in four chance of being acquired. And those companies most concerned about falling prey to a hostile bid are in the engineering sector. The next most cautious sectors are electronics and electrical equipment, household goods, printing and paper and packaging and retailers and distributors.

However, the most cautious are not necessarily the most likely to be targeted. TOI reckons the sectors most likely in the firing line this year are telecommunications, food manufacturers, chemicals, insurance, paper, packaging and printing, pharmaceuticals and the drinks industry.

So paranoid chief executives wanting to ensure they can afford to mount the defence of all defences should consider taking out a policy.

BRADFORD & BINGLEY'S NEW RATES OF INTEREST EFFECTIVE FROM 7 JANUARY 1996

Account	Balance	Annual Interest		Monthly Interest	
		Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.	Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.
Monthly Saver (Premium Rate)*	£10+	7.00	5.25	-	-
First Choice* (including Bonus)	£50+	1.25	0.94	-	-
	£500+	3.05	2.29	-	-
	£1,000+	4.60	3.40	-	-
	£10,000+	4.05	3.04	-	-
	£25,000+	4.65	3.40	-	-
Special Asset	£2,500+	3.35	2.66	3.45	2.59
	£5,000+	3.95	2.88	3.85	2.89
	£10,000+	4.35	3.71	4.80	3.60
	£20,000+	5.40	4.05	5.20	3.90
	£40,000+	5.55	4.16	5.35	4.01
	£80,000+	5.85	4.39	5.65	4.24
Premier Deposit*	£1+	0.25	0.19	-	-
	£100+	0.75	0.56	-	-
	£10,000+	3.75	2.81	-	-
	£25,000+	4.50	3.38	-	-
Privilege Bond	£5,000+	5.55	4.10	5.55	4.01
	£25,000+	6.05	4.54	5.85	4.39
	£50,000+	6.15	4.61	5.95	4.46
	£100,000+	6.25	4.69	6.05	4.54

ACCOUNTS NO LONGER AVAILABLE TO NEW INVESTORS

Account	Balance	Annual Interest		Monthly Interest	
		Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.	Gross % p.a.	Net Equiv. % p.a.
One Month Notice	£1+	0.25	1.91	2.50	1.88
	£2,500+	3.10	2.38	3.00	2.25
	£5,000+	4.05	3.04	3.90	2.93
	£10,000+	4.55	3.41	4.40	3.30
Bonus (incl. full bonus)	£1,000+	3.30	2.48	-	-
	£10,000+	4.30	3.25	-	-
Options 6	£50+	4.10	3.08	3.95	2.96
Measured Variable Bond and Biannual Bond	£250+	0.20	0.38	0.50	0.38
	£500+	2.30	1.73	2.20	1.73
	£5,000+	2.45	2.14	2.35	2.14
	£10,000+	3.30	2.48	3.20	2.48
	£25,000+	3.90	2.93	3.80	2.93
Maturity Bond	£5,000+	5.55	4.16	5.55	4.01
	£25,000+	6.05	4.54	5.85	4.39
	£10,000+	5.15	3.86	4.95	3.71
Accumul	£30,000+	5.55	1.16	5.85	4.01

*Interest rates are variable and are subject to change without notice. Net equivalent rates are calculated on the basis of a 12% interest rate. Interest will be payable on a 12 month rate of interest on which will be calculated by the bank. Net rates are rounded and are for illustrative purposes only. *Premium rate applies where 12 consecutive monthly payments are made at a 12 month period and the account remains open for the duration. *Minimum initial investment £100. *Minimum initial investment £25. For details of other accounts please call a local branch. In addition to accounts available through the Society's branches, the Society also offers postal accounts through its Direct Debit Unit. Further details can be obtained by telephoning (0454 251 24).

BRADFORD & BINGLEY
BUILDING SOCIETY

HEAD OFFICE: P.O. BOX 68, CROSSFLATS, BINGLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE BD16 2UA

THE TIMES FRIDAY JANUARY 5 1996

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LA Income	20,700	21,262	1.3%	...
LA Expenses	11,515	11,718	1.8%	...
LA Net Income	9,185	9,543	3.9%	...
LA Assets	115,776	117,710	1.7%	...
LA Liabilities	55,447	56,419	1.7%	...
LA Equity	60,329	61,291	1.6%	...
LA Cash	104,941	116,462	11%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY				
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Income	60,753	60,900	0.2%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Expenses	102,174	102,174	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Net Income	8,118	8,726	7.3%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Assets	111,111	111,111	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Liabilities	63,566	67,222	5.8%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Equity	47,545	43,889	-7.5%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Cash	92,265	71,199	-23%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Assets	1,846	1,912	3.5%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Liabilities	7,341	7,341	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Equity	1,539	1,539	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Income	152,701	163,801	7.3%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Expenses	104,682	104,682	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEE FARM LTY Other Net Income	48,019	59,119	23%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST (MID)				
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Income	18,840	18,840	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Expenses	14,040	14,040	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Net Income	4,800	4,800	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Assets	145,191	153,507	5.8%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Liabilities	10,000	10,000	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Equity	135,191	143,507	6.1%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Cash	129,759	147,576	13.7%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Assets	15,432	6,931	-55%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Liabilities	0	0	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Equity	5,900	5,900	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Income	37,440	39,920	6.6%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Expenses	28,640	28,640	0.0%	...
ROYAL LEBRON LTY TRUST Other Net Income	8,800	11,280	28%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY GROUP LTY				
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Income	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Expenses	10,880	10,880	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Net Income	6,601	7,320	10.9%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Assets	20,800	20,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Liabilities	10,000	10,000	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Equity	10,800	10,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Cash	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Assets	3,319	2,600	-21.7%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Liabilities	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Equity	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Income	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Expenses	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Net Income	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY GROUP LTY				
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Income	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Expenses	10,880	10,880	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Net Income	6,601	7,320	10.9%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Assets	20,800	20,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Liabilities	10,000	10,000	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Equity	10,800	10,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Cash	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Assets	3,319	2,600	-21.7%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Liabilities	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Equity	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Income	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Expenses	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Net Income	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY GROUP LTY				
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Income	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Expenses	10,880	10,880	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Net Income	6,601	7,320	10.9%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Assets	20,800	20,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Liabilities	10,000	10,000	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Equity	10,800	10,800	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Cash	17,481	18,200	4.1%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Assets	3,319	2,600	-21.7%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Liabilities	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Equity	0	0	0.0%	...
ST. JEROME'S PLACE LTY Other Income	0	0	0.0%	...

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Plunging Profit In	62.27	67.49	0.00	2.30
Oil Shocker	77.43	80.76	0.00	3.13
Special Cash Put	52.88	56.25	0.00	3.08
THE DIRT PRICES				
OTCDA vs. The				
American	286.52	304.00	-	1.69
-to Account	286.52	313.00	-	2.66
Oil Shocker	711.68	727.00	-	1.98
-to Account	127.11	145.00	-	10.00
European	34.24	35.00	-	0.22
-to Account	127.98	136.43	-	0.94
British Cash	237.67	212.12	-	1.40
-to Account	362.40	381.00	-	3.07
Domestic Oil	79.49	84.00	-	0.22
-to Account	51.34	54.00	-	0.66
General	231.34	209.63	-	2.31
-to Account	184.19	176.00	-	2.55
Private Income	51.92	44.00	-	6.43
-to Account	123.51	128.00	-	0.23
Oil Shocker	38.26	39.11	-	0.34
-to Account	891.73	911.69	-	1.51
Profit	442.56	488.29	-	13.00
-to Account	442.56	491.00	-	22.88
International	911.62	935.89	-	0.94
-to Account	911.62	935.00	-	1.28
Oil Shocker	191.84	192.43	-	0.31
-to Account	168.07	172.24	-	1.70

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Shares pause for breath

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996	995	994	993	992	991	990	989	988	987	986	985	984	983	982	981	980	979	978	977	976	975	974	973	972	971	970	969	968	967	966	965	964	963	962	961	960	959	958	957	956	955	954	953	952	951	950	949	948	947	946	945	944	943	942	941	940	939	938	937	936	935	934	933	932	931	930	929	928	927	926	925	924	923	922	921	920	919	918	917	916	915	914	913	912	911	910	909	908	907	906	905	904	903	902	901	900	899	898	897	896	895	894	893	892	891	890	889	888	887	886	885	884	883	882	881	880	879	878	877	876	875	874	873	872	871	870	869	868	867	866	865	864	863	862	861	860	859	858	857	856	855	854	853	852	851	850	849	848	847	846	845	844	843	842	841	840	839	838	837	836	835	834	833	832	831	830	829	828	827	826	825	824	823	822	821	820	819	818	817	816	815	814	813	812	811	810	809	808	807	806	805	804	803	802	801	800	799	798	797	796	795	794	793	792	791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784	783	782	781	780	779	778	777	776	775	774	773	772	771	770	769	768	767	766	765	764	763	762	761	760	759	758	757	756	755	754	753	752	751	750	749	748	747	746	745	744	743	742	741	740	739	738	737	736	735	734	733	732	731	730	729	728	727	726	725	724	723	722	721	720	719	718	717	716	715	714	713	712	711	710	709	708	707	706	705	704	703	702	701	700	699	698	697	696	695	694	693	692	691	690	689	688	687	686	685	684	683	682	681	680	679	678	677	676	675	674	673	672	671	670	669	668	667	666	665	664	663	662	661	660	659	658	657	656	655	654	653	652	651	650	649	648	647	646	645	644	643	642	641	640	639	638	637	636	635	634	633	632	631	630	629	628	627	626	625	624	623	622	621	620	619	618	617	616	615	614	613	612	611	610	609	608	607	606	605	604	603	60
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POP 1

Forget Britpop: the big earning power for Brits in America still resides with George Michael



POP 2

With Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin at the helm, traditional Irish music is steered towards the charts



POP 3

... while the rap veteran LL Cool J adds a little romance to his rhymes on *Mr Smith*



POP 4

Two years on from Cobain's suicide, the myth of 'cool' continues to wreck lives

George Michael is returning, to refresh the parts Britpop didn't quite reach. Alan Jackson reports

Have faith, the cat in the cap is back on song

On Monday George Michael will release what is not only his first single in more than three years, but also the first since he claimed in a court of law that his situation under contract to his former paymasters Sony Music was akin to slavery. The record, *Jesus to a Child*, is mellifluous, restrained, carefully crafted, important-sounding, regretful in tone and really rather lovely. That is a lot of adjectives for any one song to bear, which may explain why it stretches to just under seven minutes. Radio programmers must be grateful that the author's enchantment was artistic rather than physical, or they might now be wrestling to fit a latter-day equivalent of *Fidelio* into their schedules.

Meanwhile, it is hardly reckless to predict that it will enter the British charts at No 1. And the self-consciously grown-up feel to this debut recording for his new UK label Virgin would seem to confirm 32-year-old Michael's musical direction as the sad-eyed torchbearer of quality pop. Like some masculine mirror image of the Princess of Wales (after all, they shared the same hairstyle throughout the early 1980s), he presents himself in the song as being betrayed by a lover's disappearance — or, possibly, death — yet still stoic and willing to be of public service. Media reaction to the record — released to radio three weeks ahead of sale, it received more than 180 plays during the first 24 hours — suggests an enthusiasm to buy into the image. In 1996, he will be king of our hearts.

Which hardly represents a victory for the much-trumpeted phenomenon of Britpop, or the carefully fanned flames of last autumn's Damon Albarn vs the Gallagher brothers feud. Shouldn't our high street heroes be young and dangerous, equipped either with mocking grins and art school degrees (Blur) or Healeysque eyebrows and Mancunian attitude (Oasis), not relative aristos with designer suble

and a heavy heart? Possibly they should, but the relative weakness of the teenage market means that music which is safe, mainstream and of mass appeal is liable to win out over the new, the innovative and the daring. When Albarn and his girlfriend Justine Frischmann invite *Hellol* readers into their lovely home, Britain may find itself ready to crown him a family favourite. At last summer's Reading Festival, Courtney Love drew

6 In 1996, George will be king of our hearts

hoots of derision from the crowd with her lofty observation that the whole Britpop thing was not going to prove significant, particularly where American audiences were concerned. She may have been right, though. American college radio stations may love Blur and Oasis; the arch but increasingly youth-aware *New Yorker* magazine may have included *The Great Escape* and *What's the Story Morning Glory?* in its list of the 25 best releases of 1995, but neither band has ousted old dependables like Mariah Carey, Garth Brooks and Madonna from the upper regions of the American charts.

Oasis stand the best chance in the long run. Those chunky guitar chords, those echoes of the Beatles, must be more exportable than the geographically precise and more ironic musings of Blur or Pulp. But as the trade paper *Music Week* reveals in its review of 1995, our big overseas earners are still those acts marching resolutely up the middle of the road — Annie Lennox, Seal, Des'ree — and *Smash Hits* staples such as Take That, East 17 and Boyzone.

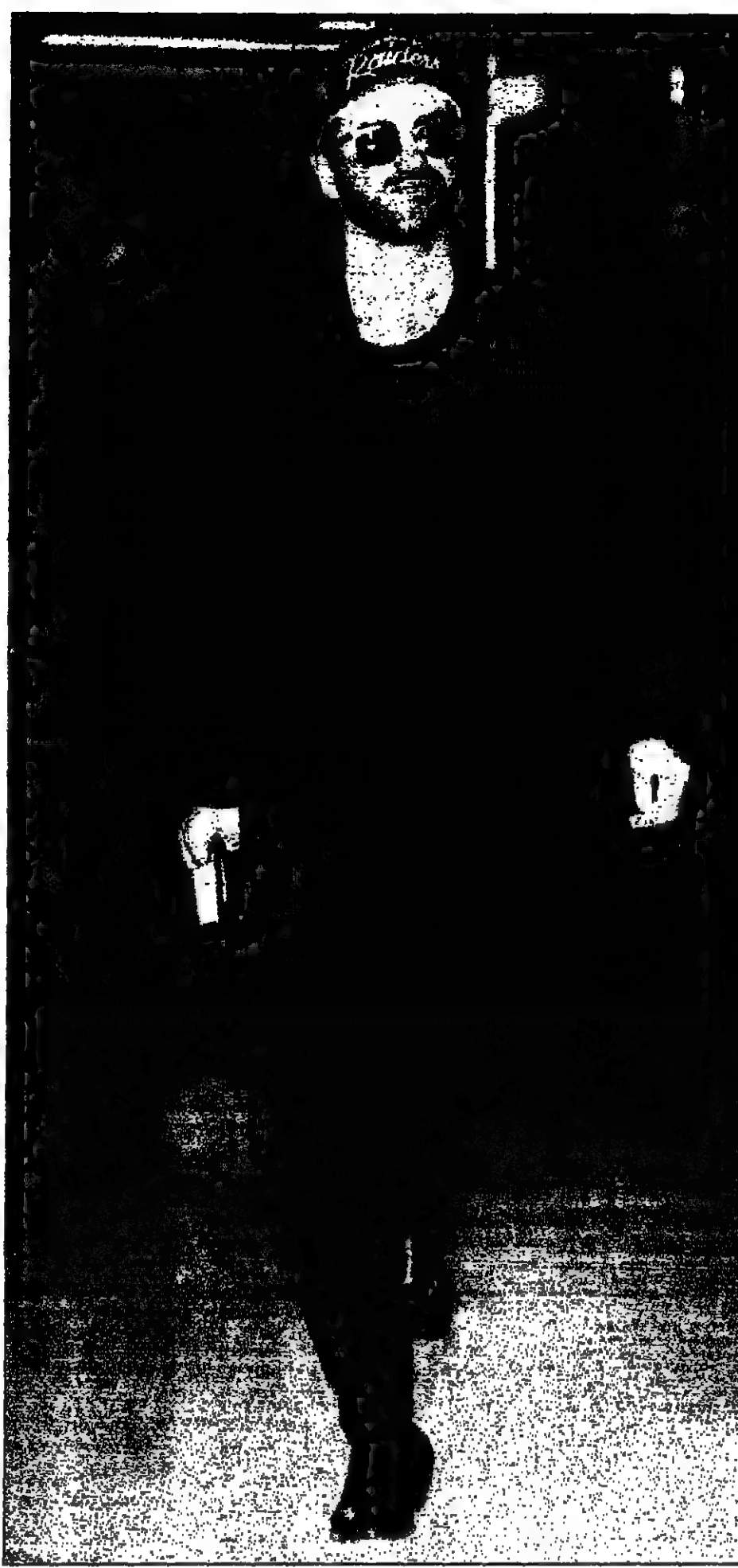
A look at the end-of-year Hot 100 singles listings in *Billboard*, the American retailer's bible, tells a similar story. After a relative famine for British acts, there are welcome signs of recovery. But with Everything But the Girl leading the charge, followed by the likes of Del Amitri and Elton John, it is no time to talk of revolution.

So too with album sales by British artists in America. Yes, a fresh-faced foursome from the North West of England has held steady at No 1 for three weeks now, but it is the Beatles with *Anthology 1*, not some representative of a genuine new wave. And you must dig deep to find the other UK acts: No 44 for Def Leppard (*Vault: Greatest Hits 1980-1995*) and to 55 for Seal with his eponymous LP, its sales enhanced by the inclusion of the single *Kiss From a Rose* on the soundtrack of *Batman Forever*.

Only the appearance of Oasis's *What's the Story Morning Glory?* at 79 — up 15 places after ten weeks of release — cheers, especially with domestic favourites like Queen (*Made in Heaven*) and Simply Red (*Life*) languishing at 151 and 170 respectively.

This gloomy picture should be changed emphatically by the release of Michael's comeback set, predicted for late March. But the fact that, where sales are concerned at any rate, he represents the Great White Hope of British pop in 1996 tells its own story. The cognoscent may anticipate the return of the Manic Street Preachers, for example, the continued ascension of Radiohead and a growth in success for up-and-coming bands such as Dubstar, Ash and Fluffy, but it still takes a familiar name and sound to lure buyers in significant numbers.

Which suggests that, come 2005, the local record industry could be looking, not to Oasis, but to Take That's Gary Barlow, by then doubtless a fabulously wealthy and be-stubbed solo star, to save its bacon.



George Michael, the LA Raider — and the New York raider, Japan raider, Australia raider...

It's better to fade away than burn out

Somehow, being cool has become a death trip. This year, let's get it back to what it was

Now, with the new year, is the time for cool to be re-evaluated pretty damn sharply. This year marks the first anniversary of the disappearance of the Manic Street Preachers' Richie Edwards, and the second anniversary of Kurt Cobain's death: and, with the jolly wave of Britpop pretty much over for the time being, 1996 is going to be a rather reflective, more melancholy year of mope-rock, drum'n'bass and trip-hop, rather than the tomfoolery and joyful escapism of Britpop. And, as long as "cool" still consists of sucking on whisky bottles, wear-

leather. But some time in the early Eighties — possibly around the suicide of Joy Division's Ian Curtis — cool turned cold. It became a crippling diction of alienation, self-loathing, self-glorification, encompassing a lifestyle of drinking, drug-taking and general misery that rendered any kind of cohesive thought well-nigh impossible. The only way to prove your worth, it seemed, was to self-destruct, to prove you "meant it" by taking your life.

This structure is apparent in both Cobain's suicide note and Edwards's last interview. These were men who had fallen for the myth of cool, and damaged and demeaned themselves living up to it when, underneath it all, they had their own guidelines and priorities for a genuinely cool lifestyle. Cobain revealed that he was ending it all because, on stage, he

CAITLIN MORAN

Cool was born some time in the early Fifties, as a generation of adolescents recoiled from their parents' war and faith in the State and music, sheep-like obedience. Cool was a simple matter then: your parents were generally God-fearing folk; quietly racist in their thick, tweedy coats. Generation definition was a simple matter of snoring and wearing a leather jacket, smoking a fag and listening to black rock'n'roll with a couple of hard mates; constructing an icy, vaguely menacing exterior off which criticism bounced, allowing you time to sort yourself out to a nationwide shifting of priorities.

As the Fifties opened up into the Sixties and an economic boom, cool turned into a consumption race — taking the most pills, drinking the most alcohol, spending the greatest number of nights wired and sleepless. The whole Beatles/Stones battle was an "anything you can take, I can take six of" battle to see who would lose their minds first.

As the Seventies, and the economic slump, kicked in, cool went back to its roots — Fifties chic was in again, and cool was a simple matter of alienation, outrage and

rampant and joyful as Freddie Mercury; and Edwards admitted the final straw had been the death of his dog, Snoopy. These were two young men who, at the end of the day, simply wanted to write *We Will Rock You* and then sit down to watch *Emmerdale* with their dog on their lap — but, having bought into the confining notion of old school cool, had to deny these urges until the last, death-silent moments.

Cool needs to be restructured entirely, by harking back to when it was a liferaft, rather than a diction. Cool was widely accepted as a freedom — to wear, drink and listen to what you wanted, where you wanted. Surely the kind of "freedom" Fifties cool embodied would now be the freedom to live a happy, gentle fourscore years and enjoy the fruits of your genius.

This brings up the unfortunate truth that Roger Daltrey, a trout-farmer extraordinaire, is cooler than Cobain — a shocking realisation for any generation, but one that needs to be absorbed. Because there is no freedom in this restrictive, shiny black-leather coffin that still persists in clinging to its former glories.

Celtic blues from the Emerald Isle

NEW ALBUMS: The future of Irish music; a rap romantic; tea-room folk

MICHAEL Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN AND VARIOUS ARTISTS

A River of Sound (Virgin CDU 2776) THANKS in part to the success of Bill Whelan's *Riverdance*, 1995 was the year when the international spotlight made one of its periodic swings in the general direction of Irish music.

But where *Riverdance* was a modern, populist adaptation (some would say an aberration) of Irish music, the unrelated *A River of Sound* (subtitled *The Changing Course of Irish Traditional Music*) offers a more thoughtful, if surprisingly open-ended, exploration of a musical tradition that runs right

through the ancient Celtic culture of Ireland.

Masterminded by the musician, composer and academic Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, the album was recorded in 1994 as the soundtrack to the three-part television series of the same name, broadcast last week on BBC2. The object of the exercise, Ó Súilleabháin told *Billboard*, the American music-trade magazine, was to provide "a snapshot of Irish music where it is, where it has come from and where it possibly is going".

The picture that emerges is of a music steeped in its own distinctive heritage yet open to

fresh influences and still evolving. Merry jigs and reels are played on fiddles and accordions, while slower, haunting airs are traced on piano and uilleann pipes.

However, Ó Súilleabháin has infuriated folk purists in Ireland by his use of orchestral arrangements on several of the numbers and by his preference for young, virtuoso performers such as the fiddler Eileen Ivers, from New York, and the concertina player Niall Vallely.

The album is all the better for embracing such innovations and two of the best pieces are percussionist Mel Mer-

cier's *Pulsus*, with its Javanese drums, Indian bells and thundering bodhran rhythms which sound almost African in provenance, and *The Real Blues Reel*, a striking harmonica duet by the New Zealander Brendan Power and Mick Kinsella, which deftly forges some unlikely links between Irish music and the blues.

LL COOL J *Mr Smith* (Def Jam/Island 529 724) CURRENTLY lodged in the American Top Three with his single *Hey Lover* (released here on Monday), LL Cool J is that rarest of creatures, a rap

veteran. In a genre notorious for its rapid and ruthless turnover of acts and fashions, he has maintained a position close to the top of the pecking order since his first hits of ten years ago.

His trick has been to leaven the braggadocio with something slightly more romantic (his 1987 hit *I Need Love* was the first bona fide rap love song) and *Mr Smith* is no exception. As well as *Hey Lover*, which is built on the bones of an old Michael Jackson song (*The Lady in My Life*), several passionate liaisons are documented in varying degrees of detail, from the comparatively innocuous *Loungin'* to the graphic humping and heaving of *Doin' It*.

These occasional displays of, erm, sensitivity are, however, kept firmly in check, and the tough-guy credentials are vigorously reaffirmed on more hoodlum-orientated material such as *Life As...* and *Get Da Drop On 'Em*. "Ain't an MC alive that fought with me," he boasts on *I Shot Ya*, and while he may be more circumspect than some of his colleagues, LL's mellow period is still some way off.

COMBUSTIBLE EDISON AND ESQUIVEL

Four Rooms (Elektra 7559-61861)

THE film *Four Rooms*, co-directed by Quentin Tarantino and with a cast which includes Tim Roth, Jennifer Beals and Madonna, has been universally panned by the critics. But the soundtrack is still a lot of fun.

Written and performed for the most part by Combustible Edison, a chic, easy-listening jazz combo for the 1990s

signed to the left-field Sub-Pop label, the album embraces elements of swing, supper-club and surf music, all flavoured with a fine sprinkling of cocktail-lounge cheese.

From the exotic, faintly Egyptian-sounding *Breakfast at Denny's* to the eccentric cha-cha-cha of *Eva Seduces Ted*, with its Hawaiian guitar and cabaret organ, the album proceeds in short, rapid bursts of instrumental colour, like a sequence of briefly incandescent fireworks.

MARTIN SIMPSON *Smoke & Mirrors* (Thunderbird TBES001; import)

A STUDENT of blues, folk and spiritual music, Martin Simpson has earned a measure of cult acclaim in America, despite making no attempt to conceal the influence of an English upbringing on his singing and acoustic guitar playing.

Without a drummer and opting for the cello playing of Hank Roberts where most comparable acts would hire a harmonica player, Simpson brings an educated ear and a clean, fast finger-picking technique to a mixture of his own compositions and standards such as *Spookin' and See that My Grave is Kept Clean*.

The result is a collection of precise, austere performances which, despite teasing every ounce of melodic potential from these rootsy tunes, tend to sound rather surly-laced — somewhat like the way John Hammond or Ry Cooder might have sounded if they had begun their careers playing in the tea rooms of England instead of the coffee shops and bars of New York and Los Angeles.

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EDUCATION

Parents must face the music

Michael Barber says parents should be compelled to meet teachers

The idea of a Learning Society, a society in which every citizen is an active learner throughout life, is rapidly gaining currency. It has been an ideal for years. Now it is perceived as a matter of economic survival.

This explains why companies such as BT and Thomson EMI are signing up to support Sir Christopher Ball's important Campaign for Learning.

These awareness-raising activities will need to be followed up with changes in policy if Britain is serious about getting ahead of its international competitors.

The policy of the present is school improvement. Last summer Gillian Shephard launched her Improving Schools Initiative. In December, Tony Blair and David Blunkett published their education programme, Excellence for Everyone, which offers the prospect of a comprehensive national strategy for the promotion of school improvement. Both the Government and the Opposition have also spelt out the corollary of this new trust in schools — that where schools fail there will be intervention in the interests of pupils.

This drive for school improvement is an essential phase in the creation of an

education service fit for the 21st century. Whether on its own it will be sufficient is much less clear. Vigorous and constructive though it is likely to be, its limitations need to be acknowledged, too. One is that even in improving schools there are individual pupils who slip through the net of educational success.

Furthermore, the focus on school improvement casts the parent in the role of innocent bystander. Although some schools make tremendous efforts to involve parents, the emphasis of policy has been on parental rights rather than responsibilities.

Yet the research evidence consistently confirms common sense. The role of parents as co-educators of their children is fundamental, both in supporting the school and in providing additional learning opportunities elsewhere, such as museum visits or participation in educational activities outside school. But, above all, supportive parents give precious time to the encouragement of learning at home.

All this undoubtedly helps young people to achieve more, but it leaves a huge policy question wide open. If we truly want a Learning Society, we have to do something about children whose parents lack either the necessary will or the

means to support their education in this way. Educators have attempted various strategies to encourage parents to become more involved in the education of their children. Schools have worked hard with mixed success at attracting parents to parents' evenings. Some have tried voluntary home-school contracts. These have been beneficial but have not done enough to bring home to parents just how important their responsibilities are. The overwhelming emphasis on rights for parents, while broadly positive, has, by implication, diminished the importance of meeting their responsibilities.

If we are serious about the

creation of a Learning Society, this will have to change. Parents should be given a statutory duty, not only to see that their child attends school, as at present, but also to attend meetings with their child's teacher at least once every six months. At the meeting the parent and teacher should set targets for that child's learning over the next six months and decide the scope of their responsibilities.

This would have a number of advantages. Parents would be clear about how they could contribute. They would also be clear about what they could expect from the school. Meanwhile, schools would benefit from the support they deserve but often do not get at present.

Above all, it would reduce the chances of any individual child slipping through the net.

To make this work a means would need to be found of making available resources to support learning out of school in disadvantaged areas. This could be done in two ways.

First, after-school study support centres, where young people could do their homework and have access to information technology and to supportive adults, should be established in every disadvantaged location in the country. There is plenty of experience to build on, much of it supported by the Prince's Trust. It works, and the cost of providing a national network of centres would be less than 0.5 per cent

of current national expenditure on schools.

Secondly, the possibility of providing vouchers to parents on low incomes for the purchase of educational resources for the home should be considered. It would be a condition of the voucher that it could be spent only on resources agreed at the statutory meetings between parent and teacher.

This sounds expensive, but vouchers worth £200 per year for the parents of the poorest four million children could be paid for, with change to spare, by taxing child benefit. The vouchers could be spent on time at a study support centre or, for example, on providing software or books.

It would be a clear policy signal that in a Learning Society the opportunity to learn is as basic and important as food, warmth and shelter.

No doubt objections other than cost will be raised. The issue of how to enforce parental attendance at school meetings will certainly arise and should be faced. The fact that attendance was a statutory duty would encourage parents and schools to give it priority. This alone would ensure that many more parents than at present would attend.

Where a parent did not attend, the main concern would be for the child. A mentor from the community could be appointed for all children whose parents regularly failed to attend. Of course, there will always be handfuls of completely irresponsible or even destructive parents. This proposal would help to draw attention to the plight of their children as a first step to doing something to help them.

Everyone agrees that the creation of a Learning Society is essential. It will not be easy. Schools, however much they continue to improve, cannot do it alone. Only if government and parents, as well as schools, take their responsibilities seriously can we make it happen.

● The author is Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. He is delivering a lecture on this theme to the North of England Education Conference today.



A parent attends a school meeting, as seen by Rockwell. But should it be compulsory?

Do as I say, but not as I do?

Susan Elkin on the need for teachers to set an example

Before Christmas, I visited a split-site school in which the two buildings lie, less than conveniently, on opposite sides of a busy main road. Of course, there is a footbridge and strict rules about pupil use of it. So how on earth can the teachers in that school justify their own dangerous weaving and dashing across the road through the traffic?

I was there less than two hours and saw several instances of this "do as I say, but not as I do" behaviour. The divisive and automatic assumption that it's fine to have two sets of rules in a school is so ingrained in many teachers that they never stop to think it might have something to do with problematic pupil behaviour in the classroom.

Elsewhere I have seen one-way traffic rules on staircases strictly enforced for everyone except staff. I taught in one school where senior staff were extremely tough about girl students wearing boots in the winter — and equally firm about bare legs in the summer. Both rules were ignored by the female teachers.

Then there are the teachers who shout — often abusively — at their pupils. They are usually among the first to complain about vicious pupil aggression. And it is often the same people who expect pupils to run errands for them who do not bother to say please and thank you. Surly behaviour is catching and it's no good these people complaining that pupil courtesy is a thing of the past.

Not having to follow the same rules is a symbolic demonstration of staff superiority. Pupils are merely

underlings. We live today, however, in a very egalitarian climate, which schools reflect. Children are taught that their human rights transcend age, class and race — and rightly so. But for those teachers who pay mere lip-service to equality, pupil rebellion will ensue.

Teachers who have the fewest incidents of unacceptable behaviour among the pupils they teach are those who role-model a high standard of commitment, concern, conformity and courtesy.

The mixed message emitted by a teacher who belittles "How dare you raise your voice at me?" at some hapless miscreant, or by one who fights through the scrum on the stairs but sends back a child doing the same thing, is dangerous.

As far as possible, schools should have agreed rules which everyone abides by. The agreement part is vital, too. If pupils and staff discuss these things together the consensus is almost always, in my experience, a commendable commonsense solution. If, for example, a community decides — for reasons of safety and to prevent mess and litter — that no drinks should be carried round the building but that consumption should be confined to designated places, then that should apply to staff.

If teachers and pupils are to work successfully together there needs to be a high level of mutual respect. To give pupils less than a strong positive example prevents that mutual respect developing and can only perpetuate discipline difficulties in schools.

EDUCATION

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White ball misbehaves at the green-baize charity party

Performing for pocket money

Snooker is not a game with which I have had a meaningful relationship. I own neither a waistcoat nor a snooker stick and though, over the years, I have played a number of games — and got a blue at Oxford, sadly missed the ensuing pink — I have yet to put together a break.

When I received this letter asking me to play in a pro-am charity game in Birmingham and read the sentence: "Don't worry if your snooker skills are a little rusty", I accepted. I chose Stephen Hendry as my



FREUD ON FRIDAY

partner: the money we were to raise was for an excellent cause and the sponsor the Liverpool Victoria — a company that set out in 1843 with the object of affording the poorer classes of society with a means to provide a decent internet at the trifling expense of a halfpenny a week (more if you were older). Last year, the company was "repositioned" as Liverpool Victoria The Friendly Society with assets in excess of those of Stephen Hendry.

The International Conference Centre, Birmingham, where we performed, is a construction of splendour with many helpful folk bearing badges inscribed Event Management, guiding guests to the hospitality-room, where comfortable waitresses trod the carpets thrusting skewers of bacon-wrapped sausage and chicken tikka at the throng. In the corner opposite the bar was the snooker table, where those whose skills were dulled by brilliance at other pastimes could practise: Mr Gary Mason, a jovial heavyweight boxer; Mr Nicholas Parsons, a



Hendry, potting for a worthy cause, is watched by his partner, borrowed cue at the ready. Photograph: Marc Aspland

comedian of different avoirdupois and Dr Hilary Jones, a medical communicator, joined me in a game which differed from that showing on the television monitor in that the number of balls on our table remained constant. Probably luck: mine is out. At the South China Golf Club last month I lost two balls in the ball-wash and on Christmas Day the pudding was stamped "best before December 24".

At the end of each first-round match in the £300,000 Liverpool Victoria Charity Challenge it is amateur time. An engaging woman, who later in the evening asked whether I had really not known that it was she who presented the weather on GMTV, introduced the pros

and the ams and they spun a wheel to determine the length of the game of Potting for Pounds: Willie Thorne and Nicholas Parsons had two and a quarter minutes; taking alternate shots, they had a score of 23 and spun another wheel to give the quotient by which to multiply the points: got £90, so MIND benefited by £2,070.

I was due to partner the world champion after his tie with John Higgins: the game was for the greater prosperity of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, tee-off at 9pm.

As snooker is an unpredictable game, the Hendry-Higgins match lasted three hours so it was at 11.15pm that I received my introduction, fol-

lowed by a lukewarm round of applause punctuated by the sounds of many spectators trying to leave.

The difference between snooker as played with friends and the professional game is equipment.

Pros have their own, carry it around in embossed leather cases. I came as I was and when the referee made "they're off" noises I announced cuelessness, then realising that attack is ever the best form of defence, I ordered the man with the white gloves to clean the balls — all of them. My cue arrived. I cancelled my request.

Bad golfers, when faced with significant putts, get the yips. I am pleased to say that under the stress of competition

and the lights and the cameras, my hands on the borrowed snooker bat remained steady.

It was my luck that was out and while it had been my intention to hit quick, short, slow shots to enable the world champion to pocket the colours and take the glory, that game-plan misfired. In the short time at our disposal it was I who found the pocket. Twice, sank the white cue ball each time.

A temporary setback for the amateurs but it should be remembered that it was our lot who built the Ark: professionals built the Titanic.

I shall hang up my waistcoat but will try to get up early and watch GMTV's weather report.

SPORTS LETTERS

Batsmen lacking in skills

From Mr Bruce Cowles

Sir, To cricket lovers the game has many unique qualities, but yet another is emerging.

There can surely be no other game in which those who represent this country in international contests display such a lack of the basic requirements of their craft. I refer to our batsmen.

In a Test match, with all the time in the world to build an innings, and facing the world's best bowling, the prime requirement must be survival. Yet, we see one batsman after another succumbing to catches, mostly to the wicketkeeper or slips with shots that from a defensive point of view need never have been played and from a run-scoring point of view (to which one can add some hook shots) are to say the least highly ill-judged.

If one were to film the efforts of our first six Test batsmen throughout a match it would show that in 30 per cent of their shots the feet are in the wrong position. In a few classic instances, they have not moved an inch from the commencement of the bowler's run-up. Brian Lara's footwork is to them as Nureyev is to Harry Champion. Ally to this a general inability to play down the line of the ball and

the malaise is there for all to see.

Why is this? The one-day game no doubt contributes much and possibly the MCC plan of producing coaches en masse some three decades ago had some effect.

Our mature commentators — the likes of Fred Trueman, Geoff Boycott, Trevor Bailey and Raymond Illingworth — make reference at times, but rarely say with force what must surely be in their minds. It is not fair for the last mentioned to assume responsibility for England's displays when he just does not have the material.

The depressing thing is that the younger players who are emerging in the early batting order display the same failings. Our Test batsmen provide examples for today's youngsters. Where are our coaches?

The ability of batsmanship, to counter anything that a bowler can produce on any pitch, is a wonderful art, but performers are a very endangered species indeed, if not already extinct.

Yours faithfully, BRUCE COWLES, The Coach House, New Barn Lane, Oakley, Surrey.

Clubs must have role

From Mr Noel K. Armstead

Sir, The Rugby Football Union (RFU) Commission report, "Open rugby — the right to decide", has yet to be approved. The RFU is under pressure from the counties association to defer final decisions for a further 12 months. If this suggestion is accepted, the game will be truly split and far from "seamless", which is the RFU's declared aim. The first and second division clubs will declare independence as there are sponsors waiting in the wings.

If the RFU is to remain truly the governing body of the whole game, then the administration needs to be further revised, reflecting the playing strengths of the game. The RFU council needs to be staffed with representatives from the league structure throughout, for this is now where the game is played. The first and second division clubs have already made this clear by resigning from the National Clubs Association, which they believe does not represent them properly.

Such a radical proposal will not be welcomed by the RFU at this stage, as it is walking a tightrope in an effort to try to keep everybody moderately happy. Compromise is the most ineffective solution when there are entrepreneurs outside the ring, ready to pay the piper and call the tune.

The RFU must be brave, acknowledge the new order and drag the administration, albeit screaming, into the 21st century.

Tell the counties that they still have a very important function to fulfil by administering rugby at all levels up to the age of 20, organising coaching and selection and, most of all, liaising with schools and colleges to ensure that the game reaches as many youngsters as possible.

The Government has a declared policy to encourage the development of sport in schools through connections with clubs and the counties would be able to administer this effectively.

Yours faithfully, NOEL K. ARMSTEAD, 8 Chiswick Lodge, Linton Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire.

Glasgow rift

From Mr Terence Wynn

Sir, I agree with much of the article written by Kevin McCarra ("Legacy of throx lost amid intolerance of divided loyalties", January 1) concerning the sectarian rift which continues to divide the supporters of Rangers and Celtic in Glasgow. However, I note that he did not advance any solutions himself, presumably because there is no solution.

Those of us old enough to remember the disaster at Ibrox Stadium on January 2, 1971, are able to experience again the shock and horror which shook the nation as well as Glasgow.

McCarra might have mentioned the memorial mass in St Andrew's Roman Catholic Cathedral in the city, which was attended by the Rangers team and the directors when

Archbishop Scanlon publicly embraced the Rangers chairman as a sign of reconciliation and sympathy.

Efforts to unite the supporters, however, are likely to be no more successful than the pitiful attempt to pay respect to the young Celtic supporter killed when he passed a Rangers car.

The untying of the scarves bearing the colours of both clubs, which had been left as a memorial, and the dumping of the flowers in a waste bin said more than any words can convey.

Yours sincerely, TERENCE WYNN, Bosco Villa, 30 Queen's Road, South Benfleet, Essex.

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Further details and application forms should be obtained from Mr M G E Paulson-Ellis, Registrar and Secretary, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ, (telephone 01603 593648), closing date Friday 19 January 1996. Please quote references AC88 (International Relations) and AC87 (Politics).

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Lake's retirement ends career of massive potential

By David Maddock

THE sport of football rarely justifies its overblown hype. Paul Lake announced news yesterday that, for once, deserved the pathos it inevitably generated. Lake, 27, has decided to end a painful struggle that has occupied him for the best part of six years, and retire from football. It is a sad loss to a game in need of the refreshing honesty that typified the Manchester City midfielder.

Lake had an immense talent that took him, even as a comparative novice, to the verge of the England team. A debilitating cruciate ligament injury cut him down just at the stage when he seemed likely to emerge as a player of genuine international pedigree.

The fateful moment came on September 27, 1990. Since then Lake has endured 15 operations and countless false dawns in a brave attempt to return to the game that, he tearfully admitted yesterday, he loves. As 1996 dawned he finally gave up the unequal struggle against constant bleeding pain and ultimately impossible odds.

Howard Kendall, the manager of Manchester City at the time of the initial injury, received the news yesterday by saying that the international



Lake: 15 operations

stage had lost the chance to witness a player of truly great potential. "It is not just Manchester City's loss it is England's as well, because he would have been captain of his country for years," he said. "He was one of the greatest talents of his generation."

Lake was injured against Aston Villa: a ruptured cruciate ligament was discovered. Several operations followed, and the Manchester-born player returned to first-team action after two seasons, full of hope. It was a short-lived optimism. In only his second game back, against Middlesbrough on August 19, 1992, he collapsed after eight minutes with the same injury. For

three and a half more years he fought a difficult personal struggle. Yesterday was the end of that fight.

Speaking in a quiet corner of Manchester City's training ground, where he has suffered manfully for so long in what has been a lonely struggle, Lake found it hard to hold back the tears. As a player he always had style and dignity; he maintained that yesterday, even during such a sad occasion.

"Firstly, I have a number of people to thank," he said. "I have been through about 15 operations and nearly 5½ years of enduring pain, most days. Without the support of my wife, my family and my close friends, this would have been over a long time ago."

"I'd also like to thank all the staff at the club, and all the wonderful fans who have given me so much support. People might say I have been very unlucky, but to have played over 100 games for this great club has been a privilege." A composed player, Lake possesses a strength of spirit that saw him through years of struggle that would have defeated lesser men.

His last hope came in early 1993 when he visited an American specialist, Dom Sisto, to have a ligament transplant. Sisto has performed the same operation on many American football players, and boasted a 100 per cent success rate. Lake was to prove, sadly, his only failure.

Lake said: "The specialist in America was great, but he warned me that he couldn't guarantee anything because perhaps by that stage too much damage had been done. I trained over the Christmas period, and with the pain that I was getting it was logical to say enough is enough and it's time to get on with the rest of my life."

The former England Under-21 and 8 player hopes now to retrain in football as a physiotherapist. Manchester City will give him a testimonial match — those who saw his unfulfilled promise as a player will wish him well.



Jones, pictured at his Edgeley Park ground, believes Stockport County can pull off an FA Cup surprise. Photograph: Brian Williamson.

Jones warms to Goodison Park mission

David Maddock on the former Everton player who is looking forward to a dream day for Stockport County

David Jones has that look an interviewer dreads. Slightly ragged, bloodshot, weary eyes: it is the look of a man who has had enough... hours ago. We are sitting in his office and he is discussing, yet again, his former club, Everton.

Jones is the manager of Stockport County, the Endleigh Insurance League second division club, and his delight — indeed, incredulity — can be imagined when they were drawn to face Everton in the FA Cup third round. He is a born-and-bred Evertonian, and played more than 100 games for the club. He still lives on Merseyside, and his family is split down the middle between red and blue.

It is, he believes, Stockport's biggest game for 30 years, and because of his connections he is a natural focus for attention. After a week of build-up, he is drained.

"I still love Everton. I was

with Liverpool as a kid but jumped at the chance when I was offered a move to Goodison," he explained. "Now everyone wants to know about it. I understand that, and I'm glad of the publicity for Stockport, but it's not really about me now, is it? It's about the players."

Jones is a football enthusiast, the best of which the lower leagues are built and a man who typifies why some fans are so loyal. He is aiming for the first division, and we should be capable of an upset. When I was at Everton, we were held to a draw by non-league Altrincham in the Cup — that says everything."

Jones is a genuine man, and everything he says carries conviction. He discusses, in-



FA CUP

telligently, the state of the game. It is better, he argued, than many critics suggest. His own side proved that when they performed admirably at Aston Villa in the Coca-Cola Cup, before going down 2-0.

It would be a terrible mistake, he believed, if smaller clubs were forced to go part-time, because they are the lifeblood of the game, and simply would not survive. The problem for Jones, and every other manager outside the FA Cup, is that the gap is growing wider.

Inevitably, though, the conversation returns to Everton. He was a player there in the late Seventies, and played in the League Cup final against Aston Villa. Everton lost after two replays, that was nothing

though, compared with the FA Cup semi-final defeat by the dreaded Liverpool.

"Bryan Hamilton scored what should have been the winner, but a terrible refereeing decision denied us. People ask me how long I felt sick afterwards. How long since that game? 19 years — well I've felt sick for 19 years."

Jones joined Coventry City soon after for what was then a handsome fee of £260,000. An England career beckoned after under-23 appearances, and the suggestion, from Don Revie, of a call-up into the senior squad. A knee injury put paid to it all. But he is not bitter, and still plays in the Southport Sunday League.

Despite the attachments, there will not be too much emotion on the return. "I don't want to look back," he said, "although I suppose I'm a bit upset already — I can't play for my Sunday team in the morning."

Venables stakes claim for his players' time

TERRY VENABLES will launch England's preparations for the European championship finals by twice gathering his squad for training in the next six weeks. The England coach, without a match until Bulgaria play at Wembley on March 7, is in no mood to waste time with the finals a little more than five months away.

His first squad session will be held at England's regular headquarters at Bisham Abbey, near Marlow, with between 20 and 22 players likely to be asked to report on Monday evening, January 22. They will work together up

to and including Thursday, January 25, with Venables asking any players involved in the West Ham v Manchester United match in the FA Carling Premiership on the Monday to report afterwards.

However, he expects to lose some candidates to Coca-Cola Cup replays that will be held that week.

The second get-together will switch to the Midlands and Aston Villa's training ground near The Belfry, a similar-sized squad assembling on Monday, February 12, again staying together until the Thursday.

Shiel commits himself to Leicester

By David Hands
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

RUGBY union's burgeoning transfer market, which has tended towards Newcastle and London so far this season, drifted into the Midlands yesterday when Leicester, the league champions of England, announced their first signifi-

cant capture of the open era from Melrose, the new Scottish champions.

Graham Shiel, 25 and capped 15 times by Scotland, has registered with Leicester, and Tony Ruse, the director of rugby at Welford Road, said: "We look forward to playing him next season. He'll be a great addition to our squad."

Shiel, who played against Leicester for the Barbarians last month, will offer badly-needed quality in the Leicester midfield, but their success represents a further blow for Melrose, who are already resigned to losing Dookie Weir to Newcastle and may start to wonder whether they can hang on to Craig Chalmers, the Scotland stand-off half. He has been connected with various English clubs and, if he believes that Melrose's successful XV is breaking up, may be tempted to renew overtures elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Cardiff will field an unchanged XV in the Heineken Cup final against Toulouse at the Arms Park on Sunday. Their match squad of 22 includes 17 internationals, of whom Jonathan Davies and Nigel Walker are among the replacements.

The Welsh Rugby Union has confirmed the appointment of Terry Cobner to the new post of director of rugby, based at Cardiff Institute of Higher Education. Cobner, who won 19 caps for Wales at flanker between 1974 and 1978 and was the most influential forward on the 1977 British Isles tour of New Zealand, will leave his teaching post at Osprey next month.

His contract will take him to the end of the 1999 World Cup, to be hosted by Wales, and puts him at the head of an expanding empire that includes Kevin Bowring, the national fitness adviser, and five development officers — Jonathan Davies, Jonathan Humphreys, Derwyn Jones, Justin Thomas and Gareth Thomas — all of whom play or played international rugby.

Wassps have successfully appealed to the Rugby Football Union to have their reorganised Courage Clubs Championship match against West Hartlepool on January 13 postponed as Lawrence Dallaglio and Damian Hopley will be on England duty.

CARDIFF: M. Rafter, S. Ford, M. Hall, M. Rafter, S. Hall, A. Davies, R. Moore, A. Lewis, J. Humphreys, J. Thomas, S. Lewis, J. Rafter, D. Jones, G. Williams, N. Taylor

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A REPORT (January 1) on the decision of the British Cycling Federation to appoint its own team to organise the 1996 World Track Championships after failing to agree terms with Sport for Television Group Ltd was inaccurate in some respects.

Sport for Television Ltd has changed its name once only, to

Superdrome Ltd. It was this company which withdrew from uneconomic track meetings last year, at all times in accordance with its contractual agreements with BCF Promotions Ltd. Sport for Television Group Ltd is in a sound financial position, and we apologise for any embarrassment caused to that company.

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WORLD-WATCHING

By Philip H. ...

Stars from the Windy City rise to take basketball by storm again

Triumvirate on verge of new dynasty



Oliver Holt travels to Chicago to watch the three men pulling the strings for the latest Dream Team

One is a rebel with lime green hair and a pierced scrotum. Then there is a softly spoken man who wears bookish glasses off the court and plays down his achievements. And, finally, there is the greatest basketball player the world has seen. Together, they have this city in their thrall. Chicago Bulls supporters thought they had seen it all before but their new "Dream Team" is turning this season into something special, heading for a place in the record books as the best basketball team ever.

When the Bulls demolished the defending National Basketball Association (NBA) champions, Houston Rockets, at the cavernous United Center on Wednesday night in front of their 402nd consecutive sell-out crowd, even the most cautious abandoned their doubts. The Bulls have won 26 games this season and lost only three, better than they have ever been at the same stage and firmly on course to establish themselves as the first team to score more than 70 victories in the 82-game year.

The strange one, Dennis Rodman, who used to date Madonna and has stated his desire to play his last NBA game "back naked", performed like a man with elastic in his arms. His speciality is rebounding, or retrieving missed shots before the opponents can, and in this skill he is beyond compare. Against the Rockets, he got 15 rebounds, more than twice anyone else's tally. He has his navel pierced, too, by the way, and his body is covered with tattoos.

The quiet one, Scottie Pippen, who has taken over the leadership of the team and is in his prime, had a bad night. He let others blame it on the "jinx" of having been awarded the NBA's player-of-the-month award for December and then lapsed into self-deprecation. "It always happens," Pippen said. "You get an award and then you play like crap."

The great one, His Airness Michael Jordan, was simply sublime. He scored 38 points, almost double anyone else's tally, consolidating his lead at the top of the table of the league's leading scorers this season. Those who said he could never be the same after his 18-month dalliance with minor league baseball are slowly but surely having their words rammed back down their throats.

Suddenly, the melodramatic

cartoon shown as pre-game entertainment — a bull charging through the streets of Chicago, making statues of lions shrink in terror and trains stop as it charges towards the arena — seems apt. In style, charisma and maturity, this team has the potential to outdo the side Jordan led to three successive NBA titles between 1991 and 1993.

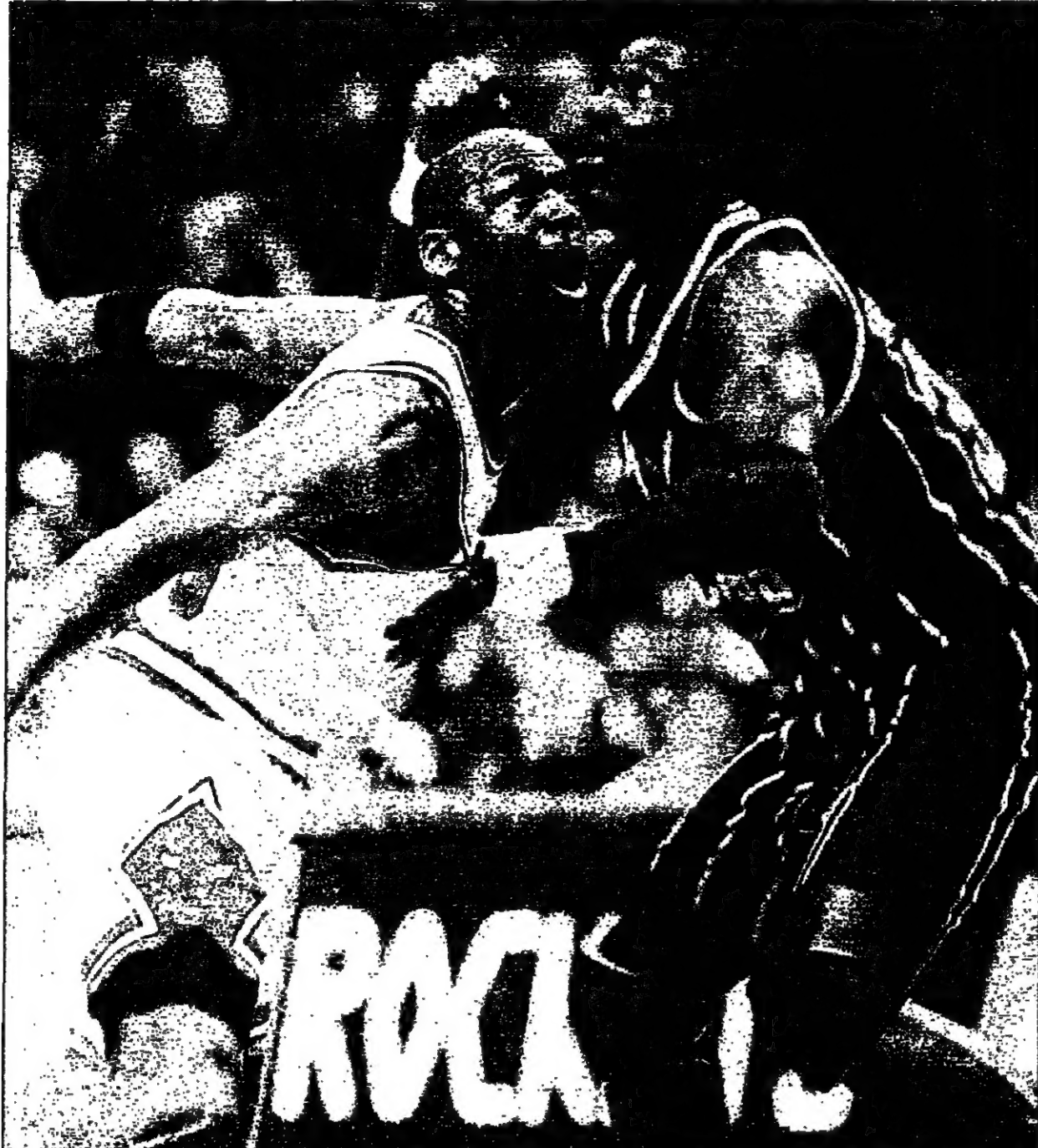
Jordan held court in the crowded Bulls locker-room after the game, happy with the 100-86 victory over a team that included Hakeem Olajuwon, who had taken over his mantle as the league's best player in his absence, confident that new conquests are around the corner.

"Without a doubt, we have the potential to be better than our previous championship-winning teams," Jordan said. "There is still a long way to go and the team that won those three titles was together for a long period of time. In that team, we knew everybody's moves and we had a good rhythm and continuity. With this team, it is a bit more like search and find. We are still getting to know each other."

"But we have been able to sustain our form so far and when we have not played well we have still found a way to win. I am surprised in a way that I think we have earned it. We have played well enough to be where we are and we are going to get better. As far as my game goes, I am happy to be where I am right now. I feel my game is coming back. I feel really comfortable with it."

While he was talking, Rodman loped past, floppy turtan hat hiding his hair, and slouched his way towards his car. He did not give any interviews but then he did not really need to. His thoughts on life and basketball, together with nude pictures of him and his girlfriend, are given plenty of space in the American edition of *Playboy* this month. He is also on the front cover of the magazine, *Inside Sports*, which bills its talk with him as, "Dennis Rodman on Sex, God and Hoops."

Although part of the notorious "Bad Boy" Detroit Pistons early in his career, and who head-butted the San Antonio Spurs' coddly mascot in his fraught years in Texas, Rodman does not play the rebel on the court. He tucked his shirt into his shorts, he ran after the ball to hand it to the referee after he had thrown it away in a fit of pique. His secret lies in



Jordan, left, faces Olajuwon, of Houston Rockets, during Chicago's victory. Photograph: Jonathan Daniel/Allsport

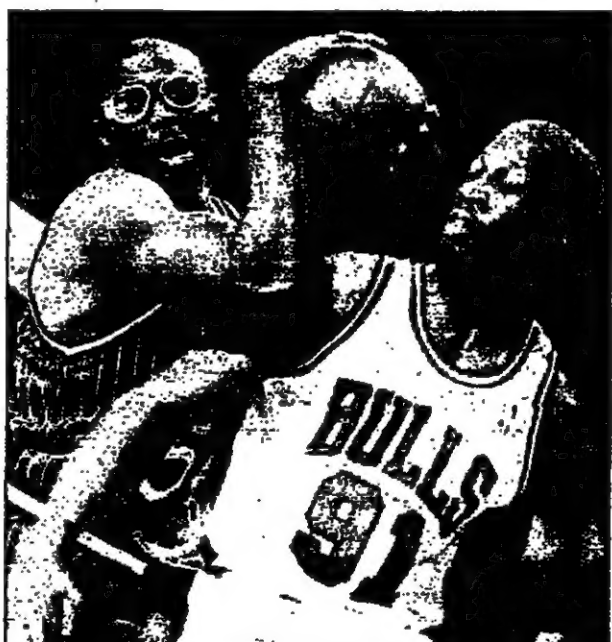
the simple realisation that, even though parts of this country foster in appalling violence and poverty, its ultra-conservative residents, and particularly its sports enthusiasts, can still be shocked by something as innocuous as an athlete dying his hair and talking about homosexuality.

In this vein, he is about to release a book called, *As Bad as I Want to Be*. "You know Madonna's book, *Sex*," he said, "It's gonna be more extreme. Like nothing you have ever seen an athlete do. I'm gonna dress like a woman and walk down the main street of Las Vegas. Right in front of the Mirage." He is also planning his own talk show, to be called *The Dennis Rodman Show*, in which he will interview his guests in drag.

Behind all this, though, he, too, is a brilliant player. He has won the league's rebounding title for the past four years and many attribute the Bulls' success this year to his signing.

"There is nothing the league can say to Dennis Rodman because I make them too much money," he said. "I bring too much excitement to the game. Michael Jordan used to do that but now it's the Dennis Rodman show on the road waiting for you. The Dennis Rodman system is to go out there and kick somebody's ass. That's what Dennis Rodman lives. That's his rule, that's my rule."

So far, everything is working to his rule, too. Rodman gets the biggest cheers and nobody really seems to mind. Jordan is a more humble man, now, happy to spread the credit. Pippen is at last getting the recognition he deserves. The omens are good. It is cold in the Windy City this January as the snow blows in off Lake Michigan but inside the United Center, the Bulls are getting hotter.



The success of the Bulls this season has been attributed to the signing of the exvortented Rodman, right

Radio choice

Old rules for young ears

My Father Said to Me. Radio 4 FM, 10.00am.

The autobiographer, Edward Blighen, plus a cast of unidentified "voices", recall some of the things that their parents inflicted on them in childhood. There was, for example, the eleventh commandment: "Do not say 'Eh?' — 'Eh' is what horses eat!" His father told him not to "slink around" in the street with girls. At 75, he ruefully admits that he would not have been any good as a stinker. His mother effectively smothered out any intellectual pretensions that he might have harboured by telling him not to think too much because it would damage his brain. One of his "voices" remembers his father instructing him to treat all girlfriends as he would his sister. "But I never had a sister!" he chuckles impishly, many decades later.

Composer of the Week: Elgar. Radio 3, noon.

One of Elgar's best-known, best-loved works and one of his least-known feature in the last of Penny Gore's selections from his vast output. There is little I can usefully say about the Cello Concerto. It has all been, and usually well, said. The performance we hear today is not the famous recording with Jacqueline du Pré and the London Symphony Orchestra under Barbirolli, but Julian Lloyd Webber's with the Royal Philharmonic under Menzies. The unfamiliar Elgar is the part-song *Zut Zut Zut*. It is not a musical impression of an angry bee but a song with a march rhythm, performed by the once-famous Morrison Orpheus male choir.

Peter Daville

RADIO 1

5.00am *4.00am* Chris Weller 8.30 *Chris Evans* 9.00 *Kate* 9.30am *12.00* *John Peel* 1.00 *John Peel* 1.30 *John Peel* 2.00 *John Peel* 2.30 *John Peel* 3.00 *John Peel* 3.30 *John Peel* 4.00 *John Peel* 4.30 *John Peel* 5.00 *John Peel* 5.30 *John Peel* 6.00 *John Peel* 6.30 *John Peel* 7.00 *John Peel* 7.30 *John Peel* 8.00 *John Peel* 8.30 *John Peel* 9.00 *John Peel* 9.30 *John Peel* 10.00 *John Peel* 10.30 *John Peel* 11.00 *John Peel* 11.30 *John Peel* 12.00 *John Peel* 12.30 *John Peel* 1.00 *John Peel* 1.30 *John Peel* 2.00 *John Peel* 2.30 *John Peel* 3.00 *John Peel* 3.30 *John Peel* 4.00 *John Peel* 4.30 *John Peel* 5.00 *John Peel* 5.30 *John Peel* 6.00 *John Peel* 6.30 *John Peel* 7.00 *John Peel* 7.30 *John Peel* 8.00 *John Peel* 8.30 *John Peel* 9.00 *John Peel* 9.30 *John Peel* 10.00 *John Peel* 10.30 *John Peel* 11.00 *John Peel* 11.30 *John Peel* 12.00 *John Peel* 12.30 *John Peel* 1.00 *John Peel* 1.30 *John Peel* 2.00 *John Peel* 2.30 *John Peel* 3.00 *John Peel* 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